Working Safely With Rabbits

This information is provided to assist you in understanding the potential occupational hazards when working with rabbits and the need in some instances to take precautions to minimize the potential for animal-to-human zoonotic disease.

Possible risks associated when working with rabbits
Rabbits raised in "clean" facilities are considered relatively free of zoonotic diseases. Rabbits are a recognized cause of allergic symptoms due to allergens that occur in the fur, saliva and urine. Potential illnesses associated with rabbits include Bordetella, Pasteurella, or Tularemia. Bites or scratches involving these rabbits or injuries from objects contaminated with body fluids from rabbits require immediate first aid and medical attention.

Recommended personnel protective equipment (PPE)
Gloves and a laboratory coat (or other dedicated protective clothing such as a scrub suit) must be worn when working with rabbits. In some cases protective eye wear is also indicated. Do not eat, drink, or apply cosmetics while working in an animal use area, and always wash your hands after handling rabbits. Remember that unfixed tissues, blood, serum, urine and other materials derived from rabbits may also pose a risk. Bedding, fur, and urine may also exacerbate allergies.

Cleaning and sanitization recommendations
Please contact LAMS Husbandry staff at (513) 558-5171.

Contact Environmental Health & Safety at (513) 556-4968 for any concerns or questions you have about working with dogs or any vertebrate animal and occupational risks. Help with training personnel in specific work practices to minimize risk can be obtained by contacting the LAMS Husbandry Staff at (513) 558-5171.