



IACUC SOP	Animal Bite/Scratch Incidents and Reporting	
SOP#302.00	IACUC Approval: 7/17/2024	IO Approval: 7/29/2024

**Purpose**

The purpose of this SOP is to describe the process for reporting incidents involving animal bites or scratches that occur with personnel using laboratory animals on IACUC approved protocols.

**General Information and Scope**

An animal bite or exposure is defined as having one’s skin pierced or abraded by an animal’s teeth or claws, or by animal saliva or tissue coming in contact with abraded skin, eyes, or mucus membranes. Bites and scratches are not merely a concern of physical injury, but there is also the potential for contracting zoonotic disease or allergic reactions.

Bites or scratches received by personnel should immediately be washed with soap and water. The supervisor needs to be informed as soon as possible after cleansing the wound. The supervisor/Principal Investigator (PI) should:

- Assist the person in obtaining medical attention if necessary.
- Assure that the appropriate procedures listed below are followed.
- Strongly recommend the person to obtain medical care if the animal has been injected with microbes, viruses, drugs, or chemicals that may be harmful to humans.
- Complete an [adverse event form](#)

A first-aid kit must be located in an obvious, readily available location in all work areas.

1. Bite and Scratch Prevention

All personnel should be trained in species-specific animal handling techniques by the PI or trained staff, as well as through participation in CITI training modules. If possible, direct handling of wild animals or any animals suspected of being infected should be avoided by using tongs, bite gloves, shields, or other protective equipment for covering the nose and eyes. Larger animals known to be aggressive should always be handled by a minimum of two people following the procedures stipulated in the protocol.

2. Bites from Rodents

Rats naturally carry bacteria in their mouth and can transmit them through bite wounds causing infection. A common oral bacterium in wild rats in North America, *Streptobacillus moniliformis*, causes Haverhill Fever approximately 2-10 days after exposure. If untreated, the disease can be fatal due to malignant endocarditis, meningoenkephalitis or septic shock.

Symptoms of infection after exposure:



- inflammation around the bite wound
- high prostrating fevers
- rigors
- headache
- polyarthralgia (pain in multiple joints)

### 3. Bites from Reptiles

Any reptile or amphibian may be infected with *Salmonella*. Clinical symptoms of salmonellosis in reptiles and amphibians can include lack of appetite, diarrhea and lethargy but many animals may be infected carriers and show no symptoms at all. Humans acquire the infection via poor hygiene and accidental ingestion of contaminated feces, water or other contaminated materials. Infected humans can develop fever, abdominal cramps, diarrhea with or without blood and less commonly arthritis, pneumonia and septicemia.

Reptiles and amphibians can carry various atypical *Mycobacterium* species including *Mycobacterium marinum*, *M. fortuitum* and *M. chelonae*. All can be associated with acute or chronic disease, but many animals are long-term carriers before clinical disease is detected.

### 4. First aid for bites or scratches may include the following:

- Let the wound bleed slightly under running water and gently scrub with a surgical sponge or clean gauze and antiseptic soap. Wash the wound until visible dirt and debris are gone.
  - Apply gauze and firm pressure to control bleeding. Apply a band aid if the wound is superficial and not bleeding.
  - Thoroughly rinse exposed mucous membranes under running water or by using the eye wash station.
5. All incidents must be reported to the Principal Investigator immediately. The person who received the bite/scratch should decide whether or not to obtain medical for the incident. If the Principal Investigator recommends medical attention but the person refuses, the PI should document this via email to the Director of Research Compliance (DRC) and Biosafety Officer (BSO) and provide a copy of the email to the person who received the injury.
6. For adverse incidents during field work studies, please refer to [RAEHS website](#).
7. Procedure for reporting incidents involving laboratory animals:  
If the person decides to obtain medical care for the incident any time following the incident, the following procedures should be followed:
- If not already involved, the Principal Investigator should be notified immediately.
  - The BSO, DRC and Department Chair should be notified.
  - PI and others involved must complete the Adverse event form and [First Report of Injury](#). Instructions for completing this online form can be found on the [UPD website](#).
  - The BSO RAEHS Assistant Manager will notify the IACUC Chair and Research Compliance Administrator upon receiving the incident report form.



- The Research Compliance Administrator will log the incident.
- Copies of the report will be provided to Institutional Official (IO), DRC, the Chair of the appropriate department.
- The report will be provided to the IACUC for review either via email or at an in-person meeting.
- Procedures required to rectify the issue should be completed and documented.
- Additional Reporting Requirements
  - a. If a faculty or staff are injured, Human Resources will automatically receive notification of the injury through the Origami system.
  - b. If a student is injured, please fill out a CARE referral form: If immediate medical attention is required, notify the Dean of Students (znaifeh@tamusa.edu). in addition to completion of the CARE form.  
[CARE Referral \(maxient.com\)](https://maxient.com).
  - c. If a visitor, contractor or volunteer is injured, HR must be notified.

**History:**

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