

Safety Note #177

ZOONOTIC DISEASE STANDARD



Animal diseases which can infect humans and cause disease in humans are called Zoonotic Diseases. Disease which is transmitted by exposure to infectious aerosol is called Aerosol-Transmissible Disease. California regulation (8 CCR §5199.1. Aerosol Transmissible Diseases - Zoonotic) requires that employers take measures to protect employee health if there is potential for exposure to aerosol-transmissible zoonotic diseases in the workplace.

The state standard requires the employer to have a written plan which identifies potential worker exposures and measures to eliminate or minimize exposures, including training, personal protective equipment, occupational health surveillance, and engineering and work practice controls. Section 5199.1 does not require a new program, but can be implemented as a supplemental appendix to the existing Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP).

The standard applies to all employees in job classifications that have potential for occupational exposure to animals that are infected with zoonotic disease or untreated waste from such animals. "Occupational exposure" means reasonably anticipated potential for inhalation, ingestion, or parenteral (needlestick or open wound) contact with animal blood, tissues or untreated waste. Common examples of activities that present opportunities for exposure to zoonotic disease are:

1. Assisting with animal care or cleaning animal housing areas during or after live birth of sheep or cattle.
2. Handling or exposure to sick or injured wildlife.
3. Handling or exposure to sick or injured agricultural or laboratory research animals.
4. Handling or exposure to untreated waste from animals that have zoonotic disease.

The job classes affected include, but are not limited to, faculty, researchers, visiting scientists, teaching assistants, laboratory technicians, fire, police, and medical personnel, first aid providers, custodial staff, health and safety representatives, and anyone with potential occupational exposure to the items listed above.

Controlling worker exposures is accomplished through use of engineering controls such as facility design and ventilation. Administrative controls include assuring that all workers with potential for animal exposures are well trained for their tasks and enrolled in an occupational health surveillance program. Where worker exposures cannot be sufficiently minimized through engineering and administrative controls, personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriate for the hazard is implemented for employees in certain work tasks as needed.

A template for a written zoonotic disease exposure control plan, which can be used to develop a site-specific plan, is available from EH&S at this link: <http://safety.ucanr.edu/files/217994.docx> Further information regarding occupational exposure to infectious disease is available by contacting UC-ANR EHS (ehs@ucanr.edu)