The intent of this Animal Care and Use Procedure (ACUP) is to describe the process for reduction of microorganisms that result from handling animals and/or objects in animal facilities. This ACUP is intended for use by all personnel that enter animal facilities. This ACUP is approved by the Cornell Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Any deviation must be approved by the IACUC prior to its implementation.

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1. Introduction

Hand washing is the most important procedure for infection control. It reduces the number of transient organisms on the skin surface. Hand washing should be conducted before eating, immediately after handling a potentially sick animal, after removing gloves, and after contact with animals or any items that are contaminated with their dander, feces or body fluids.

2. Materials

- A sink with running water
- Alcohol based waterless hand sanitizer
- Soap, preferably mild liquid soap in a pump bottle
- Soap rack
- Disposable paper towels
- Trash can
- Nail brush (optional)
3. Procedure

   a. Turn water on
   b. Wet hands
   c. Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces.
   d. Rub hands together vigorously for at least 20 seconds. Pay particular attention to nails. Use a nail brush if desired.
   e. Rinse thoroughly under running water, rubbing hands together vigorously.
      i. When liquid soap is used, clean the dispenser frequently (e.g. weekly) to minimize accumulation of dirt and debris.
      ii. When bar soap is used, use soap racks to facilitate drainage and rinse the soap bar free of dirt and debris after each use.
   f. Dry hands with a clean paper towel
   g. Turn off the water using the paper towel as a barrier between the handle and your clean hand.
   h. Dispose of paper towel in the trash can.
   i. When decontaminating hands with an alcohol-based hand rub, remove obvious debris and apply product to the palm of one hand and rub hands together, covering all surfaces of hands and fingers, until hands are dry. Your hands should be washed with soap and water as soon as possible after.
   j. Use hand lotions or creams to minimize the occurrence of irritant contact dermatitis associated with frequent hand antisepsis or hand washing.

4. Personnel Safety

   • Medical emergencies: call 911
   • When working with animals wear appropriate PPE, observe proper hygiene, and be aware of allergy, zoonosis, and injury risks. Refer to the CARE Occupational Health and Safety webpage for more information.

5. Animal Related Contingencies – N/A

6. References

   • Hand washing, An easy way to prevent infection; Mayo Clinic.com: http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/hand-washing/HQ00407
   • Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories (BMBL) 5th Edition; CDC and NIH; February 2007: http://www.cdc.gov/od/ohs/biosfty/bmbl5/bmbl5toc.htm
   • How to Wash Your Hands Poster http://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/How_To_HandWash_Poster.pdf