



CM SOP #101 – Protective Clothing and Personal Hygiene

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I. Purpose & Scope

This SOP establishes minimum requirements for protective clothing and personal hygiene practices within laboratory animal facilities to protect personnel, animals, and research integrity by reducing the risk of injury, allergen exposure, contamination, and zoonotic disease transmission. This SOP applies to all employees, researchers, students, contractors, and visitors entering or working in animal housing rooms, procedure areas, support spaces (e.g., cage wash), and other controlled areas of the facility, and includes requirements for appropriate facility-dedicated attire, PPE use, hand hygiene, and restrictions on personal items and behaviors that may compromise biosecurity.

II. Roles & Responsibilities

Comparative Medicine Staff

CM staff are responsible for:

- Wearing appropriate protective clothing/PPE when working with laboratory animals, chemicals, or biological agents, as required by this SOP and posted signage.
- Performing protective clothing and personal hygiene procedures accurately and consistently, including correct donning/doffing, hand hygiene, glove changes, and prevention of cross-contamination.
- Performing work only within the scope of training and competency.
- Maintaining facility-issued scrubs and vivarium-dedicated footwear appropriately, including ensuring scrubs are **not worn in public areas or laundered at home** and that contaminated PPE is disposed of properly.
- Stocking, maintaining, and appropriately disposing of protective clothing and PPE supplies in assigned areas, and notifying management when supplies are low or replacement is needed.
- Reporting hazards, safety concerns, PPE deficiencies, or observed non-compliance to CM management, the veterinarian, or IACUC as appropriate.

Research Staff, Students, Visitors

Research staff, students, and visitors entering CM-managed vivaria or animal procedure/support areas are responsible for:

- Complying with all protective clothing and personal hygiene requirements outlined in this SOP and any room-specific signage.
- Wearing required PPE correctly and maintaining good hygiene practices to reduce allergen transfer, contamination, and zoonotic risk.
- Disposing of facility-provided disposable PPE in appropriate containers prior to exiting the vivarium and refraining from removing PPE or facility clothing from controlled areas.
- Reporting safety concerns, hazards, or observed non-compliance to CM staff or CM management

CM Management

CM management is responsible for:



- Ensuring PPE and protective clothing requirements are implemented and enforced across CM-managed facilities to protect personnel safety, animal health/biosecurity, and research integrity.
- Ensuring adequate supplies of disposable PPE, facility scrubs, and protective clothing are available, maintained in good repair, and replaced as needed.
- Ensuring training is provided at appropriate frequency to maintain competency, with documentation of training completion.
- Reviewing reported hazards and non-compliance, implementing corrective actions and retraining when necessary, and updating PPE requirements based on emerging risks, quarantine/ABSL2 needs, or institutional biosafety guidance.
- Ensuring processes are in place for proper laundering, disposal, signage, and facility workflows that support compliance with this SOP.

III. General Notes & Definitions

Protective clothing and personal hygiene practices are critical for the biosecurity of laboratory animals, safety of personnel, and protection of research integrity. Protective clothing (cloth or disposable) serves as a barrier between personnel and animals, animal allergens (e.g., bedding dust, dander), chemicals, and biological agents, and must be used consistently and correctly. PPE requirements may vary based on room signage, hazard assessments, quarantine status, or ABSL2 conditions; all personnel must follow posted requirements. Facility-issued protective clothing (including scrubs, lab coats, and site-designated work shoes) is for use only within Comparative Medicine spaces and must not be worn in general public areas, worn off-site, or laundered at home. Personnel working with chemicals are required to wear appropriate eye protection. Hands must be washed or sanitized after animal contact and before exiting animal areas to minimize cross-contamination. Noncompliance with PPE or hygiene requirements must be reported to CM management, the veterinarian, or an IACUC representative.

- **PPE (Personal Protective Equipment):** Protective clothing and equipment worn to reduce exposure to animal allergens, chemicals, biological agents, and other workplace hazards.
- **Protective Clothing:** Facility-provided scrubs, lab coats/gowns, shoe covers, gloves, masks, protective sleeves, Tyvek® suits, and other clothing worn to reduce contamination and occupational exposure risk.
- **Facility-Dedicated Clothing/Shoes:** Scrubs and footwear designated for use only within CM-managed vivaria and support areas; these items must remain on-site and must not be taken home for laundering.
- **Biosecurity:** Practices intended to prevent the introduction or spread of infectious agents within or between animal housing areas, including minimizing personnel- and equipment-mediated contamination.
- **Allergens:** Substances (e.g., animal dander, urine proteins, bedding dust) capable of causing sensitization or allergic reactions in humans and that may be carried on clothing and PPE.
- **ABSL2 (Animal Biosafety Level 2):** Enhanced containment conditions requiring additional PPE and special practices due to moderate-risk biological agents; PPE must be removed/discarded appropriately prior to exiting such areas.
- **Donning/Doffing:** The process of putting on (donning) and removing (doffing) protective clothing and PPE in a manner that reduces contamination and exposure.



- **Cross-Contamination:** Unintentional transfer of contaminants (biological agents, allergens, chemicals) between rooms, colonies, procedures, or surfaces, often via hands, PPE, clothing, or equipment.

IV. Materials & Equipment

The following materials and equipment are required to support implementation of this SOP and must be available in or near designated changing areas, animal rooms, procedure areas, and support spaces (e.g., cage wash, quarantine):

Protective Clothing / PPE

- Disposable exam gloves (appropriate sizes and types)
- Disposable lab coats
- Safety glasses or chemical splash goggles (required when working with chemicals or splash risk)
- Cloth scrub top and long scrub pants (facility issued)
- Facility-designated work shoes/boots (e.g., vivarium shoes; boots as applicable)
- As required for surgical suites:
 - Disposable shoe covers
 - Bouffant caps/hair covers
 - Sterile gloves
 - Procedure/surgical masks

Facility Support Items

- PPE storage stations
- Coat hooks / labeled storage area for reusable lab coats
- Designated laundry baskets and/or laundry bins for soiled scrubs
- On-site washing machine(s)/drying capability (as applicable)
- Waste receptacles for general disposal of PPE
- Biohazard waste containers for PPE used in quarantine/ABSL2 or contaminated areas
- Handwashing sinks with soap and disposable towels
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer stations
- Posted room entry signage specifying required PPE (door signage)

Documentation / Recordkeeping

- Chemical labeling supplies (labels, marker/pen)
- Facility log sheets or checklist forms (as used by CM for PPE stocking, laundry workflow, and maintenance tracking)
- SOP access (printed copy or electronic access via CM website)

V. Procedure

Facility Entry and Donning Protective Clothing

1. CM staff entering the vivarium for routine work must:
 - a. change out of personal clothing in the designated locker room/changing area,
 - b. place personal clothing into lockers,
 - c. don facility-issued scrubs, and
 - d. don vivarium-designated work shoes.
2. Research staff, students, visitors, and external collaborators must:



- a. comply with all entry requirements and posted room signage,
 - b. don a disposable lab coat if entering an animal-use area.
3. If additional PPE is required (e.g., quarantine/ABSL2 areas), personnel must don the PPE at the entry point (anteroom/changing area) before entering.

PPE Use Requirements During Work Activities

1. Gloves

- Gloves must be worn when:
 - handling animals,
 - working with open occupied cages,
 - handling soiled bedding/caging components, or
 - handling chemicals/agents requiring PPE.
- Gloves must be:
 - disinfected prior to handling animals and internal cage components (as applicable),
 - changed immediately if torn or visibly soiled,
 - changed between PI colonies/cages as required.
- If gloves are used to carry items out of an animal room, personnel must:
 - remove gloves and don a clean pair prior to exiting, or
 - follow local signage requirements to prevent contamination of hallway/common surfaces.

2. Forearm Coverage

- Forearms must remain continuously covered when handling animals or working with open occupied cages using:
 - lab coat sleeves **or**
 - Tyvek® sleeves.
- Disposable sleeves must be discarded after each use.

3. Lab Coats / Gowns

- Lab coats/gowns must be worn as required by signage and when contamination risk exists.

4. Eye Protection

- Safety glasses or splash goggles are required whenever handling or pouring chemicals or whenever splash risk exists.

5. Room-Level Additional PPE

- Additional PPE may be required for quarantine, ABSL2, or biohazard-related work and will be indicated by signage or CM direction.

Protective Clothing Rules and Restrictions

1. Facility-issued scrubs, protective clothing, and PPE must be worn only while working within the vivarium, except under the following limited conditions:
 - direct travel between vivaria on the same campus without interruption,
 - transporting animals/equipment between campuses using the Comparative Medicine vehicle, or
 - brief facility-related errands to adjacent shipping/receiving docks or internal lab building areas.
2. When leaving the vivarium for general travel in public areas, personnel must change into personal clothing.
3. Under no circumstances may:



- facility scrubs be worn off-site,
 - scrubs be laundered at home, or
 - vivarium-designated shoes be worn outside the work premises.
4. External/collaborative personnel and visitors must abide by CM guidance based on risk assessment.

Clean vs. Dirty Area Protective Clothing Requirements

1. Clean Cage Wash / Clean Hallway

- Clean lab coats must be worn when preparing or handling clean caging/components to prevent contamination.
- A lab coat may be omitted only if personnel:
 - are wearing clean scrubs **and**
 - have not yet worked in other areas that day **or** have showered and donned clean scrubs.
- Lab coats used in clean areas may be reused if:
 - not soiled,
 - not removed from clean areas, and
 - stored appropriately.
- Lab coats worn in other areas may **not** be worn in clean cage wash.

2. Dirty Cage Wash

- Lab coats must be worn at all times in the dirty cage wash.
- Lab coats worn in dirty cage wash must be discarded or retained within the room per workflow and may not leave the room.
- Lab coats must be discarded prior to exiting the room.

Storage, Reuse, Disposal, and Laundry

1. Disposable Lab Coat Reuse (if not soiled)

- Lab coats may be reused if not soiled and must be:
 - labeled with initials and date of first use, and
 - stored on coat hooks in the designated area.
- Disposable lab coats must be discarded on Fridays or sooner if soiled.

2. Laundry (Scrubs and Reusable Clothing)

- At the end of the work shift, CM personnel must change into their personal clothing and place their soiled scrubs into their CM-provided laundry bag.
- Each employee is responsible for cleaning their own scrubs using the laundry facility in their respective area.
- Non-CM staff who borrow scrubs, place the soiled scrubs in the designated bin in the lockerroom:

3. Quarantine/ABSL2 Protective Clothing Handling

- All disposable PPE used in quarantine/ABSL2 areas must be discarded as **hazardous waste** prior to exiting.
- Protective clothing exposed to hazardous agents must never be worn in:
 - offices,
 - lunch rooms,
 - break rooms,
 - other “clean” vivarium areas.



- After completing work in quarantine areas, personnel must proceed directly to changing area to change out of scrubs (unless stopping briefly in dirty cage wash as needed).

Personal Hygiene Procedures

1. Personnel must arrive to work in good hygienic condition.
2. Personnel must wash hands with soap and water when possible (or use sanitizer when sinks are not immediately available):
 - after handling animals,
 - after removing gloves,
 - before leaving animal rooms, and
 - prior to eating, drinking, or entering break areas.
3. Personnel should avoid:
 - touching face/eyes,
 - using phones/devices with contaminated gloves, and
 - placing potentially contaminated devices on clean surfaces.
 - See *SOP 116: IT Device Sanitation* for device hygiene requirements.
4. The use of colognes, perfumes, and scented lotions should be minimized and may be restricted depending on research requirements.
5. Showering (including hair washing) and donning clean scrubs may be required:
 - following work in quarantine/ABSL2 areas, and/or
 - when moving from lower to higher health status areas, as directed by CM management/AV.

Maintenance and Recordkeeping

1. Any damaged or excessively worn non-disposable clothing/shoes must be discarded and replaced with approval/notification to CM Management.
2. CM Staff notify CM Management when PPE supplies or uniforms require reordering or replacement.
3. CM Management orders replacement uniforms and ensures appropriate inventory is maintained for facility operations.

VII. References & Attachments

- *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* (National Research Council), current edition.
- FAU Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) policies and guidance related to PPE, biosafety, chemical safety, and laboratory hygiene (as applicable).
- FAU IACUC Policies and Procedures (facility access, biosecurity, animal handling and safety requirements).
- *CM SOP 116: IT Device Sanitation* (for cell phones and other communication devices used within CM vivaria).
- Applicable Biosafety Committee requirements and/or institutional risk assessments for ABSL2 and quarantine operations.



VIII. Revision History

Revision Date	Revision Number	Summary of Changes
12/16/2019	101.2	Minor grammar changes
02/09/2021	101.3	Cleared up some wording, lab coat not always needed in clean areas.
01/08/2024	101.4	Address reuse of labcoats; clarification of where scrubs may be worn
03/01/2026	101.5	Changed format, ensured ADA compliance, updated guidance on laundry workflow

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