

RABIES IMMUNIZATION POLICY

Purpose

The Rabies Immunization Policy is designed to ensure that all students, staff, faculty, and administrative staff of the University working on any project, research, and/or coursework with dogs, cats and/or wild-caught mammals are protected from developing the disease.

For all on-site research projects and course work, Western University only allows the procurements and use of captive-bred, "rabies-free" animals.

Responsibility

Compliance with the policy is the responsibility of the Supervisor or Individual Researcher. It is the responsibility of the aforesaid to conduct a risk assessment and categorize a person as high risk or low risk under this policy. It is also the responsibility of the Supervisor or Individual Researcher to notify Workplace Health (ext. 82047) whenever a person under their jurisdiction requires rabies immunization under this policy.

Definitions

A. High Risk Persons

For the purpose of this policy, a high risk person is any person, who as a necessary part of his or her job description, research project, or coursework, is required to come into direct physical contact with dogs, cats and/or wild-caught mammals.

B. Low Risk Persons

For the purpose of this policy, a low risk person is any person who, as a necessary part of his or her job description, research project, or coursework, and/or that works in the animals research facility on campus, is required to come into direct contact and/or have frequent access to the captive bred, "rabies-free" animal holding areas or to observe animals in the wild, or working with body parts, or fluids of mammals not known to be infected by rabies.

Requirements

A. High Risk Persons

All high risk persons are required:

- I. To be immunized;
- II. To provide proof of immunization against rabies; or
- III. To demonstrate immunity (titre higher than 1 in 16) at either the time of hiring or enrollment, annually or the initiation of the project which causes a person to be classified as a high risk person.

B. Low Risk Persons

All low risk persons must be identified and informed of the hazards of rabies as it applies to their position. Rabies Immunization will not be required but will be provided upon request by a member of this group

Any person who through this/her job becomes high risk shall inform Workplace Health as soon as possible.

C. Annual Review

All high risk persons and any low risk persons, who wish to be included in the immunization program, will have an annual assessment of their immunity (titre), and booster shots will be given as required.

D. Cost

The cost of the immunization program and the annual assessment shall be borne by the budget unit or research project involved.

Risk Assessment

The following factors MUST be considered when determining if a person is designated as a high risk or low risk person under this policy.

A. Species of Animal

In Canada, foxes, skunks, raccoons and bats may be reservoirs capable of transmitting infection to dogs, cats, livestock and people. Therefore, work conducted with foxes, skunks, raccoons, bats, or any dogs, cats or livestock that may have come into contact with those species will be considered high risk. Also, work conducted with any wild-caught mammals will be considered high risk. If working with a non-mammal species there is no risk of rabies.

B. Source of Animal

Wild-caught mammals, pound source dogs or cats, or animals of unverifiable (unknown) origin will be considered high risk. Animals bred in captivity and those animals that have undergone quarantine and a health surveillance program of at least 30 days, as required by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), will be deemed low risk.

RISK GROUP CLASSIFICATION

It is the responsibility of the Supervisor / Individual Researcher to conduct a risk assessment and determine the risk group classification for all persons under their jurisdiction, for any project, research, and/or coursework that falls under the Rabies Immunization Policy. At a minimum, the risk assessment must include the species of the animals and the source from which the animal is procured.

I, _____, have conducted a risk assessment for the following project, research and/or coursework:

Title/description of project, research, and/or coursework :

I have determined that all persons under my jurisdiction, involved with the aforementioned project, research, and/or coursework fall into the, _____ risk group classification.

The following factors were taken into consideration:

Species of Animal:

Source of Animal:

Other Factors:

Names of staff/students/researchers:		

X _____

Date:

This form will need to be returned to Workplace Health (UCC Rm. 25) and filed as a part of the Medical Surveillance Program for each persons involved.