



Animal Care and Use Program | Occupational Health and Safety

Bites, Scratches, and Kicks

Bites, scratches, and kicks are potential hazards associated with working around research and teaching animals. Personnel working with large animals such as cows or horses could sustain crushing injury when an animal falls or shifts their body weight. These hazards are the most common physical injuries when working with animals and can be minimized or prevented through proper training in animal handling techniques. Just like humans, animals respond to stimuli in their environment such as sounds and smells and can react to stimuli which humans cannot detect. Improperly handling animals may put them in distress or pain causing them to react defensively.

To reduce your risk of injury, it is important you are aware of animal behaviors and your surroundings. Knowledge of how to restrain and handle animals correctly and being aware of their mannerisms and behavior is very important to your safety. Campus veterinary staff at the Division of Animal Resources (DAR) and Agricultural Animal Care and Use Program (AACUP) are available to assist and train.

All injuries no matter how slight must be reported to your supervisor immediately. Small animal bites may seem inconsequential at first but could lead to serious infections if proper medical attention is not sought. All individuals should maintain current tetanus immunizations and seek medical advice and treatment if an injury occurs.