

Allergy Prevention

AAALAC International considers allergy prevention to be an important topic and a key component of the occupational health and safety program. The use of engineering controls (appropriate facility design, operation, and use of safety equipment) is preferred as the primary means to minimize personnel allergen exposure. Administrative controls (appropriate processes and procedures) are the secondary means to reduce allergen exposure. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be used as an adjunct to engineering and administrative controls, rather than the initial or single means of protection. The activities most associated with allergen exposure are handling animals, cage changing, dumping soiled bedding, and other routes of exposure to animal excretions (such as laundry). Appropriate engineering controls may include: proper animal facility design and function with separation of functional spaces; a well-designed heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system with appropriate airflow patterns and air pressure differentials; consideration of cage systems and designs which minimize personnel exposure; and the use of containment equipment such as cage changing stations, bedding dump stations, and other exhausted or downdraft work benches. AAALAC International site visitors evaluate occupational health and safety programs and the methods used to prevent or minimize research animal allergen exposure through review of the procedure of risk assessment by qualified occupational health and safety personnel, periodic personnel health evaluations, engineering controls, administrative controls, the appropriate selection and use of PPE, and ongoing personnel education and training.