I. PURPOSE:

The intent of this standard operating procedure (SOP) is to describe how to treat animal related injuries. This SOP is intended for use by all personnel who handle animals, or materials that come into contact with animal bodily fluids or tissues. This SOP is approved by the Marquette University Institutional Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and the Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator (OHS).

An animal bite or exposure is defined as having one’s skin pierced or abraded by animal’s teeth or claws, or tissue coming in contact with abraded skin, eyes, or mucus membranes. Bites and scratches are not merely a concern of physical injury, but there is also the potential of contracting zoonotic disease or allergic reactions.

II. ABBREVIATIONS:

SOP – standard operating procedure
IACUC – Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
OHS – Occupational Health and Safety
ARC – Animal Resource Center

III. PROCEDURES:

BITE AND SCRATCH PREVENTION:

• Species-specific animal handling techniques are taught by the Marquette University Animal facility management or veterinary staff.
• If possible, direct handling of wild animals or any animals suspected of being infected should be avoided by using tongs, bite gloves, or other protective equipment.

BITE AND SCRATCH TREATMENT:

• The first aid kit is located in the in the animal facility
• The facility supervisor or their designee is responsible for maintaining the first-aid kit and checking the contents expiration dates.
• Contents must include:
  o Surgical scrub or Iodine scrub
  o Sterile gauze pads
  o Adhesive tape
  o Band-aids
  o Topical antibiotic ointment

If you are an employee complete: Employer’s First Report of Accident or Injury within the first 24 hours of the injury (Contact Animal Facility Management at 288-7724 for forms). Send completed forms to the office of Risk Management: P.O. Box 1881 Milwaukee WI, 53201 Zibler Hall suite 212).

If you are not an employee complete: General Incident Report (Contact Animal Facility Management at 288-7724).
FOR MINOR INJURIES INVOLVING RODENT BITES AND SCRATCHES:

- Let the wound slightly bleed under running water and gently scrub with a surgical scrub and antiseptic soap. Wash the wound until visible dirt and debris are gone.
- Apply gauze and firm pressure to control bleeding. Apply a band-aid if the wound is superficial and not bleeding.
- If needed rinse exposed mucosa membranes under running water or by using an eye wash station.
- Notify a supervisor so he/she can assess the wound and determine if a physician should be consulted.
  - A physician should be consulted to assess the wound if the wound subsequently develops increasing redness, red streaks, increasing pain, tenderness and/or warmth of involved skin about its margins, or if accumulation or discharge of pus is noted.
  - A physician should be consulted if bleeding is not controlled with direct pressure on the wound within 20 or 30 minutes, or if there is concern about a large amount of tissue having been disrupted by the bite, i.e., a gaping or flap-type wound, or a large (>1.0 cm) avulsion of tissue that extends deeper than the epidermal layer of the skin. While it is generally not good practice to suture bite wounds, as this increases risk of infection, larger wounds may benefit from being cleansed thoroughly and having disrupted tissue edges approximated by means of a soft dressing or tape.
- Contact Animal Resource Center Management (Schroeder Complex room 561 or 288-7724) to fill out the appropriate Employee Report of Incident. An incident report MUST be filled out when and injury occurs.

RABBITS:
- Modern laboratory rabbits contain few infectious pathogens. Of concern are scratches that can be inflicted with their strong hind legs and sharp claws or from bites. Secondary infection with common bacteria can result. Perform the first aid procedures as needed, as described for injuries involving rodents, and seek medical attention for severe or infected wounds.

CRAYFISH:
- If the crayfish “pinches” you and stays on, put your hand back into the water and the crayfish will let go. Crayfish will stay pinched on your finger if they are above water.
- Once the crayfish has let go, remove your glove to see if there is any skin punctures. If so follow procedures for bites and scratches.

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If you are not an employee complete: General Incident Report (Contact Animal Facility Management at 288-7724).
SOP Title: Animal Bites and Scratches and other animal related injuries

Date Revised: August 2012
IACUC Approval Date: 8/2012
OHS Approved: August 2012

TURTLES:

- Remain calm after a turtle bite. This bite is likely a warning snap that may either release or hold its grip.
- Wait for the turtle to release its bite. It may help to lower the turtle back into the water. Do not further aggravate it, as this will cause it to hold longer.
- Once the turtle has let go, remove your glove to see if there is any skin punctures. If so follow procedures for bites and scratches.

ZOONOTIC INFORMATION

LABORATORY MICE AND RATS:

There is, however, always concern about secondary infections that can occur with bites and scratches. Common skin, intestinal, and soil bacteria present on you or the animal can infect the scratch or bite wound and cause these secondary infections. Thus, handle all mice with care, always perform first aid, and seek medical consultation for severe wounds that appear to be infected. Historically, rats have been known to carry a bacterium that causes Rat-Bite Fever. However, these bacteria have not been found in laboratory rats for decades due to the special efforts of commercial suppliers to eliminate the bacteria from breeding colonies.