

TTUHSC El Paso

LARC Policy

Vivarium Visitor Policy and Authorization

These are the procedures and requirements for visitors to the Laboratory Animal Resource Center (LARC).

Policy Statement

This policy is designed to ensure that TTUHSC El Paso's research enterprise is protected, that animal exposure to adventitious pathogens is minimized, that IACUC and LARC policies and procedures are followed, and that all parties are informed of the risks involved when entering an animal facility. Visitors must obtain prior written approval from the Institutional Veterinarian or his/her designee prior to entering the LARC.

Definitions

- **Animal Facility:** Any area housing experimental animals of any species, including the TTUHSC El Paso-managed animal vivarium and IACUC-approved satellite housing areas in which animals are temporarily housed for more than 12 hours.
- **Escort:** A TTUHSC El Paso individual who has completed all required training and is authorized to access the area. This individual is required to accompany any and all visitors throughout the visit. The escort may be a member of the LARC staff, a Principal Investigator (PI), a senior laboratory member, or an IACUC member.
- **Visitor:**
 - A vendor or university employee authorized by an appropriate manager or supervisor for the purpose of facility maintenance.
 - An official from an external agency, which may include, but is not limited to the following: USDA, OLAW, AAALAC, DEA, DOD, VA, NIH, or a pharmaceutical company.
 - TTUHSC El Paso faculty, staff, graduate or professional students, or post-doctoral/clinical trainees who are NOT on an approved IACUC protocol.
 - School groups seeking to learn more about research, careers in research, and laboratory animals.

TTUHSC El Paso faculty and staff, graduate or professional students, or post-doctoral/clinical trainees who ARE on an approved IACUC protocol are NOT considered visitors. Visiting scientists who are employed at another research institution who come to TTUHSC El Paso on an as-needed basis to help with experiments are covered by the **Visiting Scientist Policy and Authorization**.

Procedure

TTUHSC El Paso is committed to ensuring that all aspects of a sound program of animal care extend to visitors of the animal housing facility. To this end, we require that visitors adhere to the following rules:

- Visitors are not permitted to handle experimental animals.
- Visitors will receive a visitor badge from the MSB1 front desk that must be worn during the entire time that they are in the vivarium and returned prior to departure. If part of a large tour group, then one group member must sign in at the front desk.

- All visitors must understand that possible exposure may occur to pathogens that are infectious to humans (i.e., zoonoses exposure). It is recommended that visitors are healthy prior to entry, with no signs of upper respiratory tract infections, influenza, or strep throat.
 - All visitors must understand that there are inherent risks in entering an animal facility, including animal bites, scratches, chemical exposures, allergic responses, and risk of injury from equipment.
 - Visitors are required to follow all facility rules and adhere to appropriate traffic flow through the vivarium.
 - No children in grade 5 or lower are permitted to enter the facilities.
 - Visitors are not permitted to photograph, video, or audiotape research animals or the facility.
 - The consumption of food, drink, or tobacco products is prohibited in the vivarium.
 - Visitors must wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment as supplied by the LARC.
 - All injuries must be reported immediately to the Institutional Veterinarian or her designee.
 - Visitors must stay with their tour group.
 - Failure to follow this policy will result in the visitor being immediately escorted out of the LARC vivarium and may result in the visitor being removed from TTUHSC El Paso property.
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Visitor's Assurances

I acknowledge the following covenants are required before I will be authorized to visit or tour the TTUHSC El Paso animal housing facility:

1. **Visitor Policy:** I have read and will adhere to the Visitor policy.
2. **Physical Security of Facilities and Animals:** I will not photograph, video, or audiotape the animals or animal facilities while touring the facility.
3. **Confidentiality:** I recognize that I may come into contact with proprietary information of TTUHSC El Paso or third-party sponsors, and that I am bound to maintain this information in confidence and in perpetuity, unless granted authority to release the information by TTHUSC El Paso, the TTUHSC El Paso IACUC, a third-party sponsor, or as otherwise may be required by a court of competent jurisdiction.
4. **Personal Danger and Indemnification of TTUHSC El Paso:** I acknowledge that there are certain inherent dangers in touring animal facilities and, to this end, indemnify and hold harmless TTUHSC El Paso, its Board of Regents and employees from any harm, howsoever caused, that may accrue to me resulting from my tour of the animal housing facility.
5. **Obligation to Report Concerns:** If I observe any practices or circumstances that I believe represent less than the highest standard of ethical care and treatment of animals, I will report such to the TTUHSC El Paso IACUC. The IACUC will consider the concerns and may call upon me to present additional details in writing or in person to the IACUC but will not be obligated to report back to me the outcome of its deliberations.
6. **Opposition to Animal Use:** To the extent I am opposed to the use of animals in research and/or training purposes, I recognize that TTUHSC El Paso's efforts to include visitors external to the IACUC and appropriate facility's management is intended to raise awareness and confidence in our animal care and use program. Note: You must acknowledge your opposition to animal use in research and training below, but this does not in and of itself prevent you from touring the facility.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read, understand and accept the covenants above and my responsibilities and obligations in visiting the TTUHSC El Paso animal housing facility.

Name (PRINT)	Signature	Date	I AM opposed to animal use in research and/or training. Y or N

