



SAFETY PROCEDURE/GUIDELINES Sheep Containment Unit

**NUMBER: Procedure Guideline SF-05
SUBJECT: Fire Alarms Procedures
Occupational Health and Safety**

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EFFECTIVE DATE: February, 2007

SUPERSEDES: June, 2005

APPLIES TO: All Personnel

APPROVED: Biosafety Committee, February, 2007

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Sheep are a common reservoir of the zoonotic agent *Coxiella burnetti*, a rickettsial micro ~~organism~~organism which, if transmitted can infect humans and may cause an illness called Q fever. About one half of people infected with *C. burnetti* show signs of clinical illness with a small percentage of clinical cases developing pneumonia and some cases developing liver disease or rarely, endocarditis.

Human infection usually occurs through inhalation of contaminated dusts and aerosols generated by infected animals, their waste products, placental tissues and fluids and contaminated straw or bedding.

The risk of exposure for personnel is significantly higher when work with pregnant sheep where large numbers of organisms may be present in placenta, birth tissues and amniotic fluids of infected animals. Persons at risk (i.e. those with valvular heart disease, persons who are immune suppressed or pregnant women) should be advised of the risk of serious illness that may result from Q fever and should seek medical advice before working with pregnant sheep.

For more information on Q-Fever, please see:

(Health Canada) <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgsppsp/msds-ftss/msds43e.html>

(CDC) <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/qfever/>

2.0 Measures to Reduce the Risk of Exposure to Q Fever

- 2.1 Sheep will only be admitted to the facility where there is no record of Q fever infection in the originating flock as determined by the best available testing methodology (See SOP 169).
- 2.2 The sheep housing facilities and operating rooms at ~~UWO~~ Western will be designed and operated at the standard required by Health Canada as stated in the “*Guidelines for Biomedical Facilities using Sheep as Research Animals*” December 2000”. This standard is available at: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ols-bsl/aminres_e.html
- 2.3 Entrance to the sheep facilities will be limited to approved persons only.
- 2.4 These procedures and SOPs are intended to reduce the risk of exposure to Q Fever for all personnel who work in the Sheep Containment Facility at ~~the University of Western Ontario~~ Western. It is essential for the protection of all, that all procedures are followed at all times by all personnel.

3.0 FIRE PROCEDURES FOR SHEEP HOLDING SUITE

- 3.1 If you discover a fire, your first priority is the safety of yourself and your co-workers. Animal welfare is a secondary concern.
 - 3.1.1 Close all doors to the fire area.
 - 3.1.2 Evacuate the building as soon as possible.
 - 3.1.3 Pull Fire Alarm as you leave.
 - 3.1.4 Meet the responding emergency crew at the main entrance; identify yourself as a Sheep Containment Unit worker to the incident commander wearing the red vest. Pass on any pertinent information about the fire to a Police Officer, a member of the emergency response team, or a firefighter. Do not re-enter until the all clear has been given by the London Fire Department.
- 3.2 If you hear the fire alarm, stay in the facility and await instructions announced on the PA system. Do not open doors to the change rooms or hallways. Only leave the facility if instructed to do so by the incident commander or HAZMAT Team member.

- 3.2.1 Upon exiting the building, you may be instructed to degown in a temporary location, such as the emergency response team trailer. Persons must remove outer wear (including scrubs) and put on a Tyvek provided. Wash your hands and face. Ensure that you give your name to the emergency responders so that medical follow-up can be done.
- 3.3 If you hear a fire alarm and the PA system announces that the fire is in the sheep unit:
 - 3.3.1 Evaluate the building as soon as possible
 - 3.3.2 Meet the responding emergency crew at the main entrance; identify yourself as a Sheep Containment Unit worker to the incident commander wearing the red vest. Pass on any pertinent information about the fire to a Police Officer, a member of the emergency response team, or a firefighter. Do not re-enter until the all clear has been given by the London Fire Department.