



Control of laboratory animal allergy

Guidance Note EH76

This guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory and you are free to take other action. But if you do follow the guidance you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law. Health and safety inspectors seek to secure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance as illustrating good practice.

INTRODUCTION

1 This guidance note draws attention to the possible health risks which could result from exposure to laboratory animal allergens. It gives advice to employers and managers of animal facilities on the precautions needed to prevent or adequately control exposure as required by the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH). It also deals with duties under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSW), including the need to co-operate and co-ordinate where different employers share a workplace. However, it does not deal with other health and safety issues relating to work with laboratory animals, for example management of infection risks and those from working with primates and farm animals.

2 The protection of animals used in experimental work is the subject of specific legislation, ie the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, which is enforced by the Home Office. This guidance takes account of the requirements of the Act and the welfare of animals, and has been produced in consultation with the Home Office.

3 This guidance note is aimed in particular at employers and managers. Other groups, such as employees and health and safety professionals, will also find it useful. It should be read in conjunction with the General COSHH Approved Code of Practice (ACOP).¹

WHAT IS LABORATORY ANIMAL ALLERGY?

4 Laboratory animal allergy (LAA) is a hypersensitivity or allergic response which may develop as a result of

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exposure to animal allergens. Approximately one third of people who work with laboratory animals may experience some allergic symptoms due to contact with, or inhalation of, animal allergens. These symptoms are typically rhinitis (runny or stuffy nose), conjunctivitis (watery or prickly eyes) and skin rashes. About 10% of workers may develop the more serious symptoms of asthma. The main, but not only, sources of animal allergens are urine, fur, hair, dander, saliva, droppings and serum from both mammals and insects. The majority of cases of allergic disease among laboratory animal workers are caused by rats and mice, probably because these are the animals most commonly used in experimental work. Other rodent species and cats can also cause a significant allergic response.

5 More information about the mechanisms underlying the development of asthma is given in *Medical aspects of occupational asthma*.²

MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY IN ANIMAL FACILITIES

6 The COSHH Regulations require employers to prevent or, if this is not reasonably practicable, adequately control exposure of employees to hazardous substances. This should be achieved by assessing the risk, deciding on suitable control measures, and monitoring, to ensure that the control measures such as safe working practices, room ventilation systems, local exhaust ventilation and respiratory protective equipment are used correctly.

7 Employers will need to ensure that the day-to-day managers of an animal facility have sufficient competence

and authority to ensure control measures are properly used. This is particularly important in some educational establishments where, for example, a senior technician may be in charge of facilities used by senior academic staff.

Shared facilities and visitors

8 Employers also have a duty, so far as is reasonably practicable, to prevent or adequately control exposure to hazardous substances in respect of other people on the premises (as well as employees). This includes students, temporary staff employed by agencies, contractors and other visitors. The table below sets out duties under the COSHH Regulations.

Duty of employer under COSHH	For the protection of employees	For the protection of other people on the premises
Risk assessment (regulation 6)	Yes	So far as is reasonably practicable
Prevention or control of exposure (regulation 7)	Yes	So far as is reasonably practicable
Use of control measures and maintenance, examination and testing of control measures (regulations 8 and 9)	Yes	So far as is reasonably practicable
Monitoring of exposure (regulation 10)	No, although may be appropriate if a valid method is developed	No
Health surveillance (regulation 11)	Yes	No
Information, instruction and training etc (regulation 12)	Yes	So far as is reasonably practicable

9 The MHSW Regulations also require employers who share a workplace to co-operate and co-ordinate so far as is necessary, to comply with relevant legislation.

10 Many animal facilities are used by different departments of the same organisation or by two or more separate employers. Employers will therefore need to ensure that any systems of work or safe working practices are followed by everyone using the facility.

Safety representatives

11 The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 give recognised trade unions the right to appoint safety representatives to represent the employees in consultation with their employer about health and safety matters. Employers have a duty to consult safety representatives, in good time, on a range of matters, including the introduction of any measure that may substantially affect the health and safety of the employees represented.

12 The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 place similar duties on employers to consult with employees who are not represented by trade union safety representatives. The consultation should be with either the employees or their elected 'representative of employee safety'.

13 More information is given in *Consulting with employees on health and safety: A guide to the law*.³

ASSESSMENT

14 COSHH requires employers to carry out an assessment of the risks to the health of employees which may be caused by hazardous substances present in the workplace. Employers will need to carry out a suitable and sufficient assessment wherever exposure to animal allergens is likely to occur.

15 To assess the risks to employees (and other workers and visitors), employers will have to identify:

- (a) all potential sources of exposure;
- (b) routes of exposure;
- (c) those people who are likely to be exposed;
- (d) how long they are exposed and how often;
- (e) which parts of the body are exposed.

16 Work activities which require special attention when assessing exposure include:

- (a) handling animals;
- (b) transporting animals;
- (c) procedures on animals;
- (d) cage cleaning;
- (e) room cleaning;
- (f) disposal of allergen-contaminated waste;
- (g) changing filters on ventilation systems;
- (h) maintenance activities.

17 People who may be exposed to allergens and who should be considered in the assessment include:

- (a) animal technicians;
- (b) scientific or academic staff and visitors;
- (c) students;
- (d) cleaning and maintenance staff (including contractors);
- (e) other visitors.

18 The assessment should include the steps which need to be taken to prevent or adequately control exposure. Employers will need to consider:

- (a) the need for animals, the type of animal model and numbers required;
- (b) the use of ventilation systems including supply and extract systems and, where necessary, local exhaust ventilation (LEV) for cage-cleaning, for example;
- (c) methods of containing animal allergens within the animal facility;
- (d) methods of animal husbandry, including stocking densities and choice of animal bedding;
- (e) appropriate animal handling and design of scientific and technical procedures;
- (f) ways of restricting access to the animal facility;
- (g) use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including respiratory protective equipment (RPE);
- (h) maintenance, examination and testing of ventilation systems, LEV and RPE;
- (i) health surveillance; and
- (j) information, instruction and training.

Measuring exposure

19 There is no standardised method for the measurement of animal allergens. However, validated techniques have been developed for monitoring exposure to rat and mouse allergens. The techniques are generally only available as research tools but in some animal facilities they are being used to help measure the effectiveness of allergen control measures. There is no occupational exposure limit (OEL) designated for animal allergens, but under COSHH, exposure to them should be reduced to as low a level as is reasonably practicable.

20 It is good practice to use the assessment to formulate 'local rules' which set out in writing the safe working practices which should be adopted. Many organisations also incorporate animal welfare matters in their local rules.

PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF EXPOSURE

21 Where work with laboratory animals is to be carried out it may not be possible to prevent employee exposure to animal allergens. Employers will need to use a safe system of work and appropriate ventilation systems (including local exhaust ventilation) to control exposure. PPE including RPE will be required when exposure to animal allergens cannot be adequately controlled by other means.

Animal house ventilation

22 For most laboratory animals, the approach to animal husbandry is determined by the status and/or needs of the animal. Usually this involves keeping animals in standard cages in a ventilated room. For some animals, such as rodents, the use of individually ventilated cages (IVCs) or isolator units is increasing. This type of unit can provide better control of exposure to animal allergens. However, an IVC or isolator unit must be carefully selected to ensure it is appropriate and the welfare of the animal is not adversely affected.

23 Where the health status of the animal needs to be protected, the IVCs or isolators may be kept at a slight positive pressure. Where the animal is deliberately infected with a potentially infectious biological agent, for example the causative agents of tuberculosis and meningitis, the normal approach is to use negative pressure containment, for example an isolator. If ventilated cage systems are being considered for housing animals which have been deliberately infected with harmful biological agents, a full risk assessment and testing for appropriate containment should be carried out. Further information can be found in *Working safely with research animals: Management of infection risks*.⁴

Standard cages in ventilated rooms

24 Ventilated rooms can be, and are designed to provide, a comfortable environment for all animal species and to provide a degree of control of exposure to animal allergens for the staff.

25 Careful attention needs to be given to the design and position of air inlets and outlets, to provide the correct animal welfare conditions without compromising worker safety and to avoid draughts and noise nuisance. Generally air is brought in at a high level at or near the ceiling, and taken out at a lower level, for example near the floor, to avoid airflows being brought up past worker breathing zones. If animals are kept in standard cages in a ventilated room, the Home Office *Code of practice for the housing and care of animals used in scientific procedures*⁵ advises that between 10 to 20 air changes per hour (depending on the type of animals kept) will provide suitable air quality for the animals.

26 Containment of animal allergens is best achieved if animal holding rooms are at a negative pressure to corridors and the animal unit itself is at a negative pressure to the outside. If, on animal welfare grounds, there is a need for positive pressurisation of animal rooms, animal allergen control needs to be achieved by ensuring that the unit is overall at a negative pressure. Restricting access within corridors, through lobbies and changing rooms with varying ventilation pressure gradients may be examples of appropriate methods.

27 The air distribution system within the animal room should be designed so that airflows that may contain airborne allergens are directed away from workers. In practice, the systems are designed to draw allergens away from workers, but the open structure of the cages means that the level of airborne allergens in the room will be higher than in a room with more enclosed ventilation systems, such as individually ventilated cages. It is likely that staff working in any animal facility using standard cages in ventilated rooms will also need to wear suitable RPE/PPE, even when the animals are not being handled (see paragraphs 48-55).

28 If room ventilation systems are correctly designed, installed, used and maintained they can help control worker exposure to laboratory animal allergens. The advice of the manufacturer and the installation, use and maintenance instructions should be included in the training and supervision of both animal-handling staff and maintenance staff.

Individually ventilated cages (IVCs) and isolator systems

29 IVCs have their own enclosed ventilation systems. These systems may be stand-alone, recirculating filtered air extracted from the cage back to the animal room through a fan and high-efficiency particulate arrester (HEPA) filter system. Alternatively, the system may be connected via ducting to the main building extraction system or extracted directly to the outside, similarly through HEPA filters.

30 IVC air change rates are higher than for standard cage rooms, for example 20 to 30 or more air changes per hour. The small total volume of all the cages compared with the large volume of the room means that the total room-air change rate may be lower than that required for a standard caged room. When using IVCs the actual room-air change rate selected needs to take account of the layout and size of the room, animal species, the stocking density and the configuration of the ventilation system. If the air extracted from the cages is to be returned to the room, a filtration system suitable for the removal of particulate gaseous and vapour contaminants will be required. Similarly, the extracted air should only be returned to the room if the room ventilation is capable of removing the excess heat generated by the animals.

31 While IVCs and isolators may be more expensive to purchase than standard cages and racks, they can be an effective way of reducing exposure to animal allergens while the animals are not being handled. There is the potential benefit of reduced ventilation costs for the building. The ventilated cage systems may require smaller amounts of air to be extracted and filtered from the room, and so less air needs to be filtered, heated and supplied.

32 RPE may not normally be required if animals are kept in IVCs, unless they are being handled or dirty bedding is being removed from the cages. Enclosed cages such as IVCs reduce the likelihood of any transfer of allergen-containing material from the cage into the room. This in turn reduces the level of room contamination and consequent cleaning.

33 Where the use of IVCs is proposed, the design and selection process needs to balance the requirements of the animal and the worker. The type of animal, cage population, and its welfare needs, in particular the microclimate, levels of noise and vibration, the need for environmental enrichment and the type of bedding material, should all be considered as part of the process.

34 The cage microclimate should ensure that the animal does not suffer excessive cooling from draughts, that airborne pollutants such as ammonia and carbon dioxide are removed, and that the environment is comfortable. Where possible, animals should be housed in pairs or groups, with cage furniture and the use of transparent cages to allow observation with minimal disturbance. Frequency of cleaning should not be compromised because of IVC containment.

35 The advice of the supplier should be sought to confirm the cage design is suitable for the proposed use. The use of such cages will only contribute to the control of

exposure to animal allergens if they are correctly designed, installed, used and maintained. The advice of the manufacturer and also the installation, use and maintenance instructions should be incorporated in the training and supervision of both animal-handling staff and maintenance staff.

Systems of work

36 Appropriate safe systems of work in animal husbandry can significantly reduce exposure to animal allergens, and the following should be considered as part of the COSHH assessment:

Cage cleaning

37 Significant exposure to animal allergens can occur: when transferring animals from dirty to clean cages or to procedure rooms; when removing dirty bedding and cleaning cages; and when carrying out procedures on animals. While effective ventilation systems should be used to help control these 'high-risk' activities, RPE will normally be required.

38 Cage emptying and cleaning should ideally be done in a separate room away from animal holding rooms, using a properly designed and operated cage-cleaning station which incorporates suitable extraction arrangements. The cleaning station needs to be sited carefully to avoid interference from draughts. The users of the station need to be trained and supervised in the correct procedures to control exposure to animal allergens. Dust and therefore animal allergens are best captured by the inward airflow of the cleaning station but PPE and possibly RPE will also be required. The design of the station should ensure an inward air velocity sufficient to draw the airborne dusts produced by the cleaning operation away from the user and into the extraction system. Generally a face velocity of at least one metre per second will be required.

39 Control of exposure to animal allergens during cage-cleaning is particularly dependent on how the task is carried out. Ventilated cage-cleaning stations can contribute to the control of exposure to animal allergens providing they are correctly designed, installed, used and maintained. The manufacturer's instructions on installation, use and maintenance should be incorporated into the training and supervision of animal handling and maintenance staff. Appropriate training and supervision of users during cage-cleaning is especially important to help control exposure.

40 HEPA filter vacuum cleaning systems with appropriate cleaning tools can also be used. This may be, for example, by a separate centralised vacuum cleaning system or, for smaller facilities, a type H vacuum cleaner. Cleaning of bedding from cages can produce large amounts of debris and therefore cleaners will need to have sufficient waste-handling capacity. Tools that can effectively scrape up and collect the bedding from the cage will be needed. An open-ended vacuum hose will not provide effective cage-cleaning or control of exposure.

41 Where a separate room is not provided for the cage emptying and cleaning and so this needs to be carried out

in the animal rooms, the use of HEPA filtered vacuum cleaning systems with appropriate cleaning tools is again recommended. However, if the noise from such a system is judged to compromise animal welfare, remote cleaners with extended hoses or vacuum cleaners fitted with silencers may be more appropriate. Where such methods of dust control at source are not possible, employees will need to wear suitable RPE/PPE.

Procedures on animals

42 Animal procedures such as shaving can lead to significant exposure to animal allergens. The use of self-contained, ventilated booths, mobile safety cabinets and flexible film isolators may then be appropriate. If not practicable, RPE/PPE may still be required, depending on the procedure being carried out.

43 Procedure rooms should be ventilated following the same principles applied to animal holding rooms.

Stock levels

44 A linear relationship has been shown between rat allergen concentration and stock density. In order to reduce animal allergen levels, stock densities should be kept as low as practicable, and in any case, at or below that set out in the Home Office codes of practice.⁵ In some species (rats, mice, ferrets and cats), female and young animals have been shown to be considerably less allergenic than adult males.

Cleaning rooms

45 Animal facilities require regular cleaning. Dry sweeping generates significant airborne allergen concentrations and should not be used. HEPA filtered vacuum cleaners are generally a more effective way of preventing airborne allergen release. In some circumstances damping down of surfaces or a wet cleaning method may be acceptable.

Animal bedding etc

46 The level of airborne animal allergen can be reduced when non-contact absorbent pads are used as cage liners instead of wood-based contact litter. In addition, various types of 'dust-free' bedding are available and can help reduce the level of airborne allergen. There are several types available including dry tray liners, paper chips, graded wood chips and saw dust. While marketed as 'dust free', it may be broken down by animals and dust will be generated. Different animals require different types of bedding and some animals will need to be able to nest. The type of bedding required should be carefully considered, and a type selected in relation to the animals' behavioural needs, as well as one which helps to reduce animal allergen levels.

Access to animal facilities

47 Access to animal facilities should be restricted to authorised personnel. By limiting the number of people allowed into an animal facility, fewer are potentially exposed to animal allergens, there are less people to monitor, less RPE/PPE is required, and fewer people will

require health surveillance. Restricting access to an animal facility can also help reduce the spread of animal allergens to other areas outside the facility because of the reduced people-traffic movements.

Personal protective equipment

48 Although engineering controls including local exhaust ventilation systems can be effective in reducing exposure to animal allergens, airborne levels generated on direct contact can still be significant. RPE/PPE will, therefore, often be required to ensure adequate control of exposure.

49 When selecting RPE/PPE, care must be taken to ensure that the quality, construction and maintenance provides the level of protection that is required. However, RPE/PPE:

- (a) only protect the wearer;
- (b) must be selected carefully;
- (c) have to be put on, worn and taken off properly;
- (d) may limit the wearer's mobility or ability to communicate;
- (e) should not restrict the wearer's ability to work safely; and
- (f) their effectiveness will depend on proper storage, cleaning, maintenance, training and adherence to good working practices.

Respiratory protective equipment

50 Selection of RPE for work in animal facilities requires careful assessment. To reduce exposure to animal allergens, RPE needs to be suitable and fitted correctly. Different types, for example disposable dust respirators, half-mask dust respirators with disposable filters, and ventilated visors or helmets may all be appropriate for different situations. As a minimum, disposable respirators with appropriate CE marking conforming to BS EN 149: 2001 *FFP2 (Filtering face piece type 2)*⁶ should be provided. 'Surgical masks' and 'nuisance' dust masks offer no protection against animal allergens and should not be worn.

51 Effective protection is dependent on proper fitting and correct use. In particular, equipment such as the disposable respirator and the half-mask dust respirator with disposable filter(s) relies on a good seal between the mask and the face. As with other types of clothing, one size will not necessarily fit all faces. Achieving a good face fit can be a particular problem for people with a small face. Employers may need to trial and purchase a number of different types of mask to ensure suitable types are selected for all employees. Disposable respirators and half masks are not suitable for employees with beards or facial hair in the area of the seal, and alternative types of RPE such as ventilated visors will be required. For employees who cannot wear disposable respirators or half-mask respirators with disposable filters, powered respirators incorporating hoods and helmets may be appropriate. Similarly, if work procedures require significant amounts of manual effort, powered equipment may be more suitable, as reliance on a tight fit can be uncomfortable to the wearer. This type of equipment can provide higher levels of protection and can sometimes be

used by people who suffer from LAA (see paragraphs 68-69). Further guidance on the selection of RPE is given in *The selection, use and maintenance of respiratory protective equipment: A practical guide*⁷ and more information on approval and suitability can be obtained from RPE manufacturers.

Other protective equipment

52 Protective clothing for work in animal units should be selected on the basis of protecting workers from skin contact with animal allergens and also reducing the spread of them. Often this will involve a complete change of outer clothing including shoes. As a minimum requirement, laboratory coats which are only for use in the animal units, and overshoes or alternative shoes, should be worn. These coats should have side or back closure with quick release studs/stoppers or Velcro fasteners to the neck and be fitted with close-fitting or elasticated cuffs on long sleeves.

Skincare

53 Animal allergens can cause harmful health effects following skin exposure. Wearing gloves during animal handling work that are carefully selected according to the task can reduce the risk of harm occurring. Powdered latex gloves should normally be avoided as these themselves can cause skin allergies and asthma.⁸ Where gloves cannot be worn, the importance of regular hand-washing and the use of suitable moisturisers and emollient creams should be emphasised. Wearing gloves and/or regular hand-washing will also help reduce the spread of animal allergens outside the animal unit.

Management of personal protective equipment

54 COSHH requires employees to make full and proper use of any control measure provided, including RPE/PPE. Management systems need to ensure that all workers wear RPE/PPE wherever and whenever it is required. Such systems should include formal monitoring of safe working practices and use of RPE/PPE, coupled with investigations of incidences where workers fail to use RPE/PPE provided. Employees should be made aware of their duties under COSHH and under sections 7 and 8 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. Further guidance on managing health and safety can be found in *Management of health and safety at work*⁹ and *Successful health and safety management*.¹⁰

Pathogen-free units

55 Workers in pathogen-free units will be required to adopt standards of hygiene and wear clothing which prevents them transmitting infectious agents to animals in their care. The selection of RPE/PPE in these units should not compromise the health of staff, and so suitable protection for workers against exposure to animal allergens will still be required.

Welfare facilities

56 The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 set out welfare requirements for

workplaces. Suitable facilities (which are not contaminated with animal allergens) should be provided to enable employees to rest and eat, where meals are taken regularly in the workplace. In addition, washing and changing facilities should be provided to help reduce the spread of animal allergens.

MAINTENANCE, EXAMINATION AND TESTING OF CONTROL MEASURES

57 COSHH requires that equipment used to control hazardous substances should be properly maintained and should be periodically subject to a thorough examination and test to ensure that it remains in good working order.

Ventilation systems

58 General ventilation systems and room supply and extract systems should be maintained in good working order and should be periodically examined and tested.

59 LEV should be thoroughly examined and tested by a competent person at least once in every 14 months. A record of the tests must be kept for at least five years after the date on which they are made. In addition, frequent visual and other checks may be appropriate for some equipment to ensure its efficiency is being maintained. Further information about testing of LEV is contained in *Maintenance, examination and testing of local exhaust ventilation*.¹¹

Respiratory protective equipment

60 RPE (excluding disposable masks) should be thoroughly examined, tested and maintained at suitable intervals (at least once a month). Records of the tests should be kept for at least five years after the date of the test.

61 All RPE should be suitably stored to prevent accidental damage and contamination from allergens.

HEALTH SURVEILLANCE

62 Health surveillance is appropriate for all employees who are likely to be exposed to animal allergens, its purpose being to detect any early signs of ill health among employees. The health surveillance programme should be under the overall supervision of an occupational health physician.

63 Health surveillance for employees exposed to animal allergens would normally include:

- (a) completion of suitable questionnaires to find out about past or present respiratory symptoms;
- (b) measurement of lung function;
- (c) a self-reporting system for relevant symptoms;
- (d) the completion and review of health records.

A lower level of health surveillance may be acceptable if exposure to animal allergens is limited or infrequent, for example for maintenance engineers.

- 64 Health surveillance is best conducted as follows:
- (a) at the pre-employment stage to help assess an individual's suitability for employment and to provide a baseline for evaluating the results of health surveillance;
 - (b) for newly exposed workers at additional periods, ideally at six weeks and then twelve weeks after the employee has started work, to find out if they are showing any symptoms of sensitisation; then
 - (c) annually while exposure continues; and
 - (d) additionally at the discretion of the supervising occupational health physician.

65 Employers need to make sure that employees understand the risks to their health from being exposed to animal allergens and are aware of the early symptoms of LAA. They should be encouraged to report any symptoms to a suitable manager. The manager should not make judgements about the symptoms but refer individuals to an occupational health nurse or doctor. Further guidance is given in *Medical aspects of occupational asthma*² and *Preventing asthma at work*.¹²

Health surveillance for students

66 Students are not normally employees, though they may spend some time in an animal unit as part of their studies. There is no legal requirement for health surveillance for non-employees under the COSHH Regulations. However, it is good practice to ensure that all students who work with animals are:

- (a) aware of the risk of LAA;
- (b) know the symptoms of LAA; and
- (c) are encouraged to report any symptoms to a responsible person.

67 If risk assessments indicate that a student is expected to spend a considerable amount of time working with animals (for example on a research project), it is good practice to carry out full pre-employment screening and health surveillance in the same way as that required for employees.

Procedures for people suffering from LAA

68 Ideally, people who are diagnosed as suffering from LAA should avoid all exposure to animals and should, if possible, be deployed elsewhere in the organisation. Employers should set out procedures for responding to a confirmed new case of LAA. These should include measures to :

- (a) protect the person/people while the cause of the symptoms is investigated;
- (b) review the assessment and control measures; and
- (c) report the case to the enforcing authority if a doctor has notified the employer of it in writing. This is required by the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

69 If an affected person needs to continue to work with animals even on a temporary basis (for example to complete a research project) then this should only be considered after consultation with the individual

concerned and an occupational physician. A review of the use of all process controls and engineering controls, including the use of RPE/PPE, should be carried out and the person will almost certainly require more frequent health surveillance.

INFORMATION, INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING FOR EMPLOYEES

70 All workers who are, or may be exposed to animal allergens must receive sufficient information, instruction and training to understand the risks and the precautions they need to take to adequately control that exposure, for example the correct use of LEV systems for cage cleaning. This should be part of the induction programme for new employees. Training should include details of how control measures are to be used. Proper supervision, particularly of new or inexperienced workers is essential. Those who have to carry out assessments, thorough examination and testing of ventilation systems, monitoring of RPE/PPE usage and working methods should also have received the necessary information, instruction and training to ensure they are competent to do the work.

71 Where RPE is used, workers should be trained to check that it fits properly and be given clear instructions on when it is to be used, how it is to be maintained, stored and/or disposed of, if appropriate.

Notification of reportable disease

72 In accordance with RIDDOR, HSE must be notified if:

- (a) a written statement is received from a registered medical practitioner (for example the employee's GP) stating that an employee suffers from occupational asthma; and
- (b) the employee is currently carrying out work involving exposure to animals, including insects and other arthropods (whether in their larval form or not) for the purposes of research, or education, or in laboratories.

Further guidance can be found in *A guide to the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995*.¹³

REFERENCES

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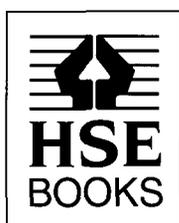
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