Working With Amphibians and Reptiles

All personnel working with animals, their tissues, or working in areas where animals are housed must complete an Animal Use Medical Screening Form every 3 years or more often at the discretion of the Occupational Health Nurse. This is a program to identify and provide follow up for individuals who may be at greater risk for contracting zoonoses. This form can be accessed electronically at: http://www.ehs.washington.edu/rbs/resocchealth.shtm

1. Zoonotic diseases from amphibians:
   - *Salmonellosis*: transmission is through the oral/fecal route, directly or indirectly. Incubation period: 6-72 hrs. Symptoms include sudden onset of diarrhea, nausea, abdominal pain, and low-grade fever.
   - *Leptospirosis*: transmission is usually through an open wound or mucous membrane after coming into direct contact with urine or tissues of infected animals. Incubation period is 2-30 days. Disease in humans can range from unapparent infection to severe infection: flu-like symptoms.
   - *Psittacosis*: transmission by direct contact or inhalation from exudates, secretions or desiccated feces. Incubation period is 4-15 days. Symptoms include fever, headache, weakness, upper or lower respiratory tract disease.
   - *Spongiform and Edwardsiella tarda*

2. Tetanus booster should be obtained every 10 years.

3. Gloves should be worn when working with amphibians and reptiles. Hands should be thoroughly washed upon completion of tasks with them/removal of gloves.

4. Injuries:
   - Immediately wash area thoroughly with soap and water for at least 15 minutes.
   - Control any bleeding and cover with protective dressing (bandage, etc.).
   - For any injuries, needlestick/sharps injury or for signs/symptoms of wound infection such as redness, swelling or pain, contact the Employee Health Center-University of Washington (UW EHC) at Hall Health at 206-685-1026. After hours or if the clinic is unavailable, go to the UWMC Emergency Department (ED).
   - Report injuries on the Online Accident Reporting System (OARS) which can be accessed through the EH&S website: http://www.ehs.washington.edu/ohsoars/index.shtm

5. Illness:
   - If you develop signs or symptoms that you think may be related to your work with amphibians, reptiles, and/or research work, contact the EHC-UW at 685-1026. If you see your own provider, inform him/her that you work with amphibians and any other pertinent information regarding your research work.

6. Allergies:
   - Sensitivity to amphibians and reptiles is rare, yet there have been cases of asthma caused by frog proteins. Contact the UW EHC if you experience this symptom when working with amphibians.

EH&S Research and Occupational Safety, ohnurse@uw.edu, 206-221-7770, Box 357165, Rev.11/7
7. **References**: Occupational Health information from Univ. of WA,
   - UCD (http://safetyservices.ucdavis.edu/ps/occh/acuohp/pem/zis),
   - WSU (http://www.iacuc.wsu.edu/acp/zoonotic.asp),
   - U.S. Airforce (http://www.phsource.us/PH/ZD/CZ/Sparganosis.htm)