Human occupational health and safety is an integral component of any responsible animal care and use program. The Animal Policy and Welfare Oversight Committee’s (APWOC) Occupational Health and Safety Working Group is responsible to identify the risks of working with research and teaching animals with protocol-related hazardous radioactive, chemical and biological agents and substances and to discuss and evaluate safe practices to mitigate these risks.

1- MEMBERSHIP

The Chair of the Occupational Health and Safety Working Group is appointed by the Chair of the APWOC for a three year (renewable) term. Members are ex officio and include:

a) Animal facility managers/supervisors (or designates) from each constituent of McGill University and affiliated Research Institutions, one of which is the Chair.

b) Veterinarian(s), members of the McGill Veterinary Committee

c) Occupational/Environmental health and safety officers from the various constituents of McGill University and affiliated Research Institutions

d) A McGill University Animal Compliance Office (ACO) Representative

Others, including visitors/consultants and experts on specialized subjects of interest can be invited as needed.

2- RESPONSIBILITIES

Working in close conjunction with the Environmental Health and Safety Offices of McGill University and of McGill affiliated Research Institutions, and other relevant bodies:

1. To identify and mitigate risks associated with working with animals that are administered hazardous radioactive, chemical and biological compounds;

2. To identify and mitigate risk of zoonotic diseases, allergies and physical injuries;

3. To identify and mitigate ergonomic and physical risks of working in an animal facility environment;

4. To collaborate in the creation and review of standard operating procedures (SOPs) in order to mitigate the identified risks;
5. To assist local safety units to encourage safe working habits and share ideas to enable optimization and harmonization of secure work practices.

3- MEETINGS AND PROCESS

1. The Occupational Health and Safety Working Group will meet on an “as needed” basis.
2. The Working Group shall report its activities to the APWOC.
3. Minutes detailing discussions and decisions of the working group are produced for each meeting.

Approved by APWOC September 1, 2021