Guidance for Field Biologists

Field biologists handling apparently healthy wild birds in areas where highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 strain is not suspected should:

- Work in well-ventilated areas if working indoors.
- When working outdoors, work upwind of animals, to the extent practical, to decrease the risk of inhaling aerosols such as dust, feathers, or dander.

- When possible, wear rubber or latex gloves that can be disinfected or discarded and protective eyewear or a face shield while handling animals.
- Wash hands often as described above, and disinfect work surfaces and equipment between sites.
- Do not eat, drink, or smoke while handling animals.

Handling Birds Associated with Mortality Events

Field biologists handling sick or dead birds associated with a mortality event should:

- Follow the recommendations above and at a minimum wear protective clothing, including coveralls, rubber boots, latex or rubber gloves that can be disinfected or discarded.
- Minimize exposure to mucosal membranes by wearing protective eyewear (goggles) and a particulate surgical mask (NIOSH N95 respirator/ mask is preferable).
- Decontaminate work areas and properly dispose of potentially infectious material including carcasses.
- Do not eat, drink, or smoke while handling animals.

Getting Assistance

For additional information see the USGS Wildlife Health Bulletin #05-03 available online at www.nwhc.usgs.gov/publications/wildlife_health_bulletins/WHB_05_03.jsp.

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

World Class. Face to Face.

Environmental Health & Safety

P.O. Box 641172

Pullman, WA 99164-1172

(509) 335-3041

Wenatchee ... 509-663-8181

Tri-Cities 509-372-7163

Vancouver 360-546-9706

Spokane 509-358-7993

http://www.ehs.wsu.edu

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

World Class. Face to Face.

Environmental Health and Safety

Protection from Avian Influenza:

Guidelines for Animal Care Staff, Laboratory Workers and Field Biologists

Think Safety. Act Safely!

Guidelines for Animal Care Staff

Farm workers and animal care staff should know and follow biosafety security practices to prevent the introduction of avian influenza and other diseases into a poultry flock. They should also know the signs indicating birds are infected with avian influenza viruses so, when necessary, they can take immediate steps to protect themselves and other workers, quarantine the farm to prevent spread of the disease, and report the disease to the responsible animal health authorities.

Hygiene / Personal Protective Equipment

Persons who have been in close contact with the infected animals or contact with contaminated surfaces should wash their hands frequently.

Workers directly involved with avian influenza-infected animals, including culling, transport, or disposal activities, should be provided with appropriate personal protective equipment:

- Protective clothing capable of being disinfected or disposed, preferably coveralls plus an impermeable apron or surgical gowns with long cuffed sleeves plus an impermeable apron;
- Gloves capable of being disinfected or disposed; gloves should be carefully removed and discarded or disinfected and hands should be cleaned;
- Respirators that meet the minimum recommendation of a disposable particulate respirator (e.g., N95, N99 or N100) used as part of a comprehensive respiratory protection program;
- Goggles; and
- Boots or protective foot covers that can be disinfected or disposed.

Vaccines and Exposure

Unvaccinated workers should receive the current season's influenza vaccine to reduce the possibility of dual infection with avian and human influenza viruses. Workers should receive an influenza antiviral drug daily for the duration of time during which direct contact with infected animals or contaminated surfaces occurs.

Potentially exposed workers should monitor their health for the development of fever, respiratory symptoms, and/or conjunctivitis (i.e., eye infections) for one week after their last exposure to avian influenza-infected or exposed birds or to potentially avian influenza-contaminated environmental surfaces.

Individuals who become ill should seek medical care and, prior to arrival, notify their health care provider that they may have been exposed to avian influenza.

For additional information, please refer to the OSHA Safety and Health Information Bulletin *Guidance for Protecting Workers Against Avian Flu* at www.osha.gov/dsg/guidance/avian-flu.html.

Guidance for Laboratory Workers

Clinical specimens from suspect influenza A (H5N1) cases may be tested by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) assays using standard Biosafety level (BSL) 2 work practices in a Class II biological safety cabinet. Additional commercial antigen detection testing can be conducted under BSL 2 levels to test for influenza.

Highly pathogenic avian influenza A (H5N1) is classified as a select agent and must be worked with under BSL 3+ laboratory conditions.