

Canadian researcher maybe exposed in lab to Ebola

November 8 2016

A researcher at Canada's National Centre for Foreign Animal Disease in Winnipeg was "potentially exposed" to the Ebola virus, authorities announced Tuesday.

The person was working with pigs infected with Ebola in a level four containment lab Monday at about 2 pm local time and noticed a "split" in the seam of their protective suit during decontamination procedures after exiting the room.

The garment was new.

Canadian Food Inspection Agency director John Copps said [emergency procedures](#) were followed and the risk to Canadians was low.

The researcher, who was not identified to the media, was offered an experimental Ebola vaccine developed at the facility and used with success against an outbreak in Africa.

The individual showed no symptoms and would remain under observation in isolation for 21 days, Copps said.

Ebola is spread by contact with bodily fluids, and causes a range of symptoms from fever and body aches to vomiting, diarrhea and hemorrhage.

According to the World Health Organization, Ebola has killed up to 90

percent of those infected during some outbreaks, though the average chance of survival is about 50 percent. A 2014 epidemic killed more than 11,000 people in West Africa.

Copps said the researcher had been picking up and moving anesthetized pigs from a pen to a bench where the animals were examined.

A total of six pigs were infected to determine if interferons—proteins released by animal cells usually in response to a virus—inhibited replication of the Ebola virus.

The National Centre for Foreign Animal Disease is co-located in Canada's National Microbiology Laboratory, which holds samples of the world's deadliest diseases for research.

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