Subject: Overnight and Long-Term Housing of Animals in Investigator Laboratories

BACKGROUND

The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (the Guide, NRC 2011) states: “Animals should be housed in facilities dedicated to or assigned for that purpose, not in laboratories merely for convenience. If animals must be maintained in a laboratory to satisfy the scientific aims of a protocol, that space should be appropriate to house and care for the animals and its use limited to the period during which it is required. If needed, measures should be taken to minimize occupational hazards related to exposure to animals both in the research area and during transport to and from the area.” (p. 134). Additionally, the institution must provide the Attending Veterinarian with access to all animals. (p. 14)

Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals

III. Definitions

B. Animal Facility - Any and all buildings, rooms, areas, enclosures, or vehicles, including satellite facilities, used for animal confinement, transport, maintenance, breeding, or experiments inclusive of surgical manipulation. A satellite facility is any containment outside of a core facility or centrally designated or managed area in which animals are housed for more than 24 hours.

IACUC Policy

1. Research animals must be housed within the DLAR facilities. Animals may be taken to the researcher laboratory for up to 12 hours but then must return to the DLAR facility.

2. If experimental manipulations require overnight housing in a laboratory, it must be justified and approved in the IACUC protocol application or via amendment. Approval for overnight housing is limited to rats, mice and fish. For mice and rats a “Husbandry Checklist” (includes the Standard Operating Procedures for the specific species) must be completed by the Principal Investigator and signed by a DLAR representative. Fish housing documentation must also be provided for approval and signed by a DLAR representative.

3. If animals are housed more than 24 hours in a laboratory, this laboratory is designated as a satellite animal housing facility and must comply with all pertinent regulations as if it was a DLAR facility.

   a. The proposed laboratory housing space must be appropriate with regard to all applicable requirements, including: temperature, humidity, light cycle, air exchanges, pathogen control, security, and employee safety. Additionally, an appropriate sanitization program must be established for the housing space. Occupied cages may not be stacked on top of one another or kept on the floor.

   b. A min/max thermometer must be used and checked daily. If the temperature falls outside of the temperatures recommended in the Guide, it is the laboratory’s responsibility to report the problem to WSU FP&M. If satisfactory corrective action is not obtained, contact DLAR for assistance.

   c. The temperature in the room must be monitored 24 hours a day to detect life-threatening heat accumulation or loss resulting from mechanical failure. The system must be equipped with a remote alarm monitor to notify personnel when a temperature extreme is detected, and a procedure must be in place to immediately address the situation and protect the animals.
d. The laboratory should be kept at a negative pressure to the corridor. This should be checked daily, and it is the laboratory’s responsibility to report problems to WSU FP&M. Ventilation should be maintained at 10-15 air changes per hour. HVAC systems must be verified at least once every 3 years.

e. A light timer must be used to provide the appropriate light cycle (12 hrs. on, 12 hrs. off is the typical setting).

f. Noise and vibration in the laboratory and adjacent areas should be kept to a minimum.

g. Cage changes must be done using an N-95 mask, a cage changing station or a biosafety cabinet.

4. Animals must be checked daily, including holidays and weekends. Ill animals should be reported immediately to a DLAR veterinarian. A necropsy should be performed by a DLAR veterinarian any time an animal unexpectedly dies.

5. DLAR or laboratory personnel may provide daily animal care for the animals while they are housed in the laboratory. If laboratory personnel provide the care, they must be trained by DLAR and use the applicable DLAR Standard Operating Procedures or other procedures that ensure regulatory standards are met.

6. Documentation of animal care activities, a log of temperature and humidity, and a census sheet must be maintained by laboratory personnel, and the documents must be clearly posted or readily available upon request. Documents must be submitted to the DLAR Leader of the facility of origin or Business Office each month, by email, fax, or campus mail.

   a. For rats and mice, a census sheet needs to be completed and submitted to DLAR each month as full per diem rates apply. A “Daily Room Chart” and “DLAR Census Sheet” can be found on the IACUC website.

   b. For fish, the number of fish used in experiments must be submitted to DLAR annually. However, accurate records must be assessable so that they can be reviewed at any time by the DLAR, IACUC or Research Compliance Specialist. Fish users must manage their colonies to ensure that the number of animals used/bred does not exceed the number approved by the IACUC. If necessary, amendments to increase animal numbers must be submitted.

7. Information should be posted in the animal housing area to reflect contact information for the principal investigator, DLAR veterinarian, and any other support personnel that may need to be contacted in case of an emergency. The current emergency veterinary on-call roster with phone numbers must be visibly posted in the immediate area.

8. If the animals are kept permanently outside of the DLAR facility, then a recurring veterinary visit should be scheduled and a morbidity and mortality report must be submitted to the DLAR veterinarian.

9. All animals must be accounted for in the institution’s disaster contingency plan. Laboratory staff must have a disaster plan or must participate in the DLAR disaster plan. Regardless, emergency access must be provided to DLAR to provide emergency care or verify that animals have been taken care of in the event of an emergency such as a building evacuation (for example, in the event of a building system malfunction). A key to the satellite room must be provided to a DLAR veterinarian upon approval of the satellite housing request.

10. All laboratories housing animals will be checked regularly by DLAR staff, IACUC inspectors, and/or Research Compliance staff.

11. The IACUC may revoke permission for laboratory housing if the facility becomes unsuitable for continued housing of animals for any reason. Such reasons may include changes in regulations, non-compliance by research staff, deteriorating facilities, protocol termination, or if rationale is no longer valid.

12. Any changes to the rationale for housing in a laboratory must be approved by the IACUC before implementation.