

**Washington University
School of Medicine
Division of Comparative Medicine**

**Animal Care
Standard Operating Procedures**

Excerpt

IV. Laboratory Housing

Justification for laboratory housing of animals must be provided to and approved by the Animal Studies Committee (ASC). To insure compliance with all university, state and federal regulations, random inspections of all laboratory housing areas are performed by Division of Comparative Medicine (DCM) veterinary technicians as representatives of the ASC. Any policy violations cited during these inspections will be brought to the attention of a DCM veterinarian and, if necessary, the Animal Studies Committee. Training regarding the proper care and use of animals is available through the DCM office. The ASC handbook, which outlines policies regarding animal care and use at Washington University, is available through the Animal Studies Committee office and online at <http://medicine.wustl.edu/~asc/manual/>.

A. Laboratory Personnel

1. Protective equipment (gloves, mask, eye shields, respirators) shall be provided by the laboratory as necessary for the safety of personnel.
2. Personnel performing surgery shall wear proper protective clothing (mask, gloves) per university policy.
3. Animal areas shall be separate from personnel areas.
4. Personnel shall check animals daily and complete appropriate records.

B. Animal Environment

Laboratory housing of mice and rats for periods greater than 24 hours requires the provision of an adequate environment for the animals. Animal stress due to environmental factors may adversely affect research outcomes.

1. Room temperature shall range from 64EF - 79EF.
2. Room relative humidity shall range from 30% to 70%.
3. A 12 hour on/12 hour off light cycle shall be maintained.

4. Noise-producing activities (radios, lab equipment) shall be minimized or conducted in rooms or areas separate from animal housing.
5. Animals shall be separated by species.
6. Animals shall be observed at least daily, including weekends and holidays.
7. A standard mouse cage shall house no more than 5 adult mice.
8. A standard rat cage shall house no more than 3 adult rats.
9. Emergency contact numbers for DCM veterinary staff shall be posted in animal housing areas.

C. Cages

1. Cages and water bottles must be obtained from and returned to DCM.
2. Cages housing animals shall not be stacked.
3. Cages shall be identified via cagecards that include the Principal Investigator's name, protocol number, animal's date of arrival or date of birth, vendor source and age of the animal when it arrived.

D. Cage Changing

1. Cages and bedding shall be changed twice per week by laboratory staff.
2. Cages and other equipment shall be sanitized by DCM.
3. Records of cage and bedding changes shall be kept and made available to inspectors.
4. Clean bedding shall be stored in sealed containers.

E. Food and Water

1. Animal food shall be obtained from DCM.
2. Food and water must be provided *ad libitum* unless scientific justification has been provided to and approved by the Animal Studies Committee.
3. Food and water must be changed twice per week.
4. Records of food and water changes shall be kept and made available to inspectors.

5. Food shall be stored in sealed, airtight containers clearly and prominently marked with the milling date.
- F. Drugs and Supplies
1. Drugs and supplies kept in the laboratory shall be within the manufacturer's expiration date.
 2. Expired drugs and supplies shall be disposed of in a manner consistent with manufacturer's labeling and university policy.
 3. Controlled substances must be secured in a locked cabinet or drawer.
 4. Detailed logs of controlled substance use and disposition must be maintained per state and federal Drug Enforcement Agency regulations and be made available to inspectors upon request.
- G. Surgery
1. All surgeries performed in the laboratory must be in compliance with ASC policy.
- H. Euthanasia
1. Euthanasia shall be performed in a humane manner that minimizes animal stress and is consistent with ASC policy.
 2. Other animals shall not be present when euthanasia is performed.
- I. Waste Disposal
1. Animal carcasses shall be bagged and placed in dedicated cold storage or the DCM freezer.
 2. The Environmental Health and Safety Office shall be contacted regarding disposal of other hazardous wastes.