

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

DIVISION OF COMPARATIVE MEDICINE
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

SOP#: 400.32

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TITLE: Rodent Husbandry

SCOPE: Animal Care Personnel

RESPONSIBILITY: Facility Manager, Technical Staff, Veterinary Staff

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I. PURPOSE

1. To ensure the highest quality of animal health, and to preclude the development of spontaneous diseases or disorders which could compromise the integrity of studies, and the interpretation of results.
2. To ensure personnel handling rodents perform their duties in a manner that complies with all current governing laws, regulations, and guidelines.

II. RESPONSIBILITY

1. The Veterinarians oversee all aspects of animal health and are assisted by all program staff.
2. Facility Managers ensure implementation of all procedures.

III. PROCEDURES

1. Receipt

- a. Individual cage cards are prepared for each cage and include the following information:
 1. Principal Investigator
 2. IACUC #
 3. Species +/- strain
 4. Sex
 5. DOB (age on arrival if unavailable) or body weight
 6. Arrival date
 7. Source
 8. Prior procedures or conditioning performed
- b. Shipping containers are inspected for signs of damage and shipment accuracy.
- c. Technician will notify the Facility Manager regarding any damage to shipping containers or contents.
- d. Containers that are damaged, wet, or contaminated are rejected, and animals are euthanized.
- e. Facility Manager will notify the Animal Shipping/Ordering Coordinator of damaged or rejected shipments or orders improperly filled (i.e., weight, age, number requested).
- f. A veterinarian is consulted whenever rodents in undamaged containers appear ill or members have died in transit.

- d. Gerbils: Grasp by the base of the tail to pick up animals for observation or cage changes. The tail tip is very fragile and picking the animal up by the tip can result in injury to the tail. Another method is to cup both hands under the gerbil and gently lift it from the cage. Restraint of a gerbil for examination or treatment is similar to the restraint used for a mouse.

3. Environmental Enrichment and Social Housing

- a. Appropriate social interactions among members of the same species and enrichment of the animal's environment are essential to normal development and well-being.
- b. All rodent housing receives environmental enrichment, unless an exemption has been approved in writing by the IACUC. See **SOP #403 Rodent Enrichment**. Examples of environmental enrichment include nesting material for mice and wooded chew sticks for some rodent species.
- c. Any environmental changes made must be communicated to and approved by the researcher prior to implementation.
- d. Single housing of rodents should be the exception and must be justified based on experimental requirements or veterinary-related concerns about animal well-being.

4. Feeding and Watering

- a. Refer to **SOP #022**, entitled **Feed and Bedding**, for a list of approved diets.

NOTE: procedures below are not for animals on special diets or water.

Special diets must be described in an approved IACUC protocol (e.g., .002 Tw 2.6 (pr)-6 (ot)-6.

performed and recorded on CMDC #244 prior to staff leaving. Staff conducting the "Final Food/Water" check and completion of CMDC #244 are the technician that is assigned to that animal housing room for that day.

- c. Health surveillance on weekends and holidays will occur once per day
- d. Observations and communications must be noted on the **Room Status Sheet** and the Facility Manager's **Animal Health and Environmental Concern Form**.
- e. Performance of daily observations and general health surveillance:
 1. Each animal/cage is observed to evaluate:
 - a. Food and water intake
 - b. Fecal output
 - c. Assurance of water supply and patency
 - d. General appearance (e.g., presence of lesions/injuries, coat condition, disposition)
- f. Refer to **SOP #006**, entitled **Animal Health and Environmental Surveillance**, for specific procedures of reporting and recording health concerns.

5. Cage changing will be noted on the **Room Status Sheet**.
- f. Cages are changed one cage at a time and husbandry practices planned so that the microisolator filter top is removed from the cage for the least possible amount of time and frequency.
 - g. IVC caging is changed as a unit. IVC caging that is excessively soiled (e.g., rat caging, diabetic animals) may be changed weekly with bottoms and bottles changes one week and complete unit changed the second week.
 - h. Static micro-isolator filter tops, wire bar lids, environmental enrichment devices, and shelf/rack units will be changed on a rotational basis, a minimum of every other week.
 - i. IVC cages are changed one cage at a time and husbandry practices planned so that the microisolator filter top is removed from the cage for the least possible amount of time and frequency.

