Laboratory Housing for Research Animals

**Purpose**
To establish UC Davis requirements when housing or holding animals in Principal Investigators (PI’s) laboratories for more than 12 hours.

**Policy**
Research animals must be housed in approved, dedicated animal housing facilities (vivaria); they may not be housed/held in a PI’s laboratory overnight. An exception to this policy can be granted by the IACUC for individual protocols if there is sufficient justification provided within a newly proposed protocol or amendment.

Laboratory housing is not ideal due to occupational health issues for personnel exposed to the animals. Measures should be taken to minimize occupational hazards related to exposure to animals both in the laboratory area and during transport to and from the area. Laboratories also lack optimal environmental controls (e.g., temperature, lighting). Convenience alone is not adequate justification for laboratory housing.

Keep in mind, if you are returning animals to the vivarium after hours, in order to minimize disruption of the animal’s light cycle, animals should be removed and returned to the vivarium during the set light/dark cycle.

**Definitions**
A. “Laboratory Housing area” is defined as any area that holds animals overnight in non-vivaria space.

B. “Laboratory study areas” are defined as non-vivaria space used for holding animals for less than 12 hours to conduct studies.

All laboratory housing and study areas must be clearly identified in the approved Animal Care and Use Protocol. These laboratories will be inspected on a regular basis according to IACUC-04 “Laboratory/Study Area Inspection Program [1]”.

**Procedure**
A. Principal Investigators:
To request housing or to study live, vertebrate animals overnight in a site other than vivaria space, the P.I.
must specify the location in the Animal Care and Use Protocol and provide written standard operating procedures (SOPs) following the Minimum Standards of Care Policies (http://safetyservices.ucdavis.edu/article/standards-care-program-policies [2]). This will include provisions for daily observations (including weekend and holidays), provisions for food and water, cage changing procedures and intervals, veterinary care, census recording, and minimum and maximum environmental temperature recording. Convenience is not an acceptable justification for requesting permission to house animals outside of the vivaria.

The area must be inspected by the IACUC and/or the Attending Veterinarian (or delegate) prior to use.

B. Review and inspection:
It is the P.I. ’s responsibility to assure that animal care is conducted in accordance with the approved protocol. Provisions for veterinary care must be arranged with the Attending Veterinarian (or delegate).

The IACUC and/or Attending Veterinarian (or delegate) will inspect laboratory housing areas at least twice per year.

The IACUC and Attending Veterinarian must have access to housing areas 24 hours a day. This may require providing the IACUC with a key to the laboratory.

C. IACUC Requirements:
1. Approvals are only valid for the specific protocol, species, duration of time, and number of animals for which the IACUC has previously reviewed and approved.
2. All personnel working in the laboratory must participate in the Occupational Health Surveillance System [3], including those who are not directly involved with animal use due to exposure to allergens.
3. Animals must be held under secure conditions such that they cannot escape from their enclosures or be removed from the laboratory by unauthorized individuals.
4. UC Davis transportation guidelines Transporting Rodents to and from Research Laboratories [4] must be adhered to while moving animals to and from laboratories.
5. Fish and amphibian housing will require special review by vivaria staff to ensure there is an adequate supply of water, drainage and electricity for the aquaria, or tank, pumps, etc.
6. All animals, or cages, must be clearly marked with the P.I. ’s name and protocol number.
7. Cages or transportation boxes (clean or dirty) must not be left in public corridors.
8. All rodent cages must have micro-isolator bonnets to reduce potential allergens and possible transmission of rodent diseases.
9. All waste must be disposed of via proper waste stream.
10. The veterinarian must be contacted for concerns about animal health.
11. Documentation indicating procedures in the husbandry SOPs are performed and that the animals are
checked daily.

12. Supplies (food and cages) must be available prior to housing any animals.

13. Light cycle in the laboratory must match that in the vivaria, unless otherwise indicated in the protocol and SOP.

14. Food and supplies must be appropriately stored in sealed, leak-proof, vermin-proof containers, and used within 6 months of the milling date. Food must be labeled to indicate mill date or expiration date.

15. Protocol information must be conspicuously posted.

16. Methods for reporting Animal Care and Use Concerns (Concern Reports: Animal Care and Use [5]) must be posted.

17. Allergy warning signs must be posted when rodents are housed in the lab.

18. The housing or study area must be maintained in a clean and organized manner.

19. Daily temperature monitoring must be documented. Ventilation must be adequate for the number of animals housed. This may require review by Facilities Management.

20. Daily census of animals must be maintained and recorded.

21. Husbandry records must be maintained for at least three years.

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Contact

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