

UC Davis Office of the Attending Veterinarian Standards of Care

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| Policy: | SC-32-200 |
| Date: | 7/19/15 |
| Enabled by: | Guide AWA PHS |
| Supersedes: | 11/12/2009 |

Title: Husbandry Care of Cats

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the minimum standards of care for cats.

II. Policy:

III. All units providing animal care for cats must meet or exceed these minimum requirements based on the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), the Public Health Service Policy, and the ILAR *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*.

IV. Procedure:

Daily Tasks (365 days a year without exception):

Observe each animal and check for health concerns. Record sick and dead animals and report to Campus Veterinary Service or designated clinical veterinarian per standard operating procedure for reporting sick or dead animals. Feed each animal (feed must be appropriate for the individual's age and condition *AWA 3.9a*). Exemptions must be approved in animal care and use protocols. Expiration dates for food must be readily available per the Standard of Care for food storage. Food requiring refrigeration must be labeled with date opened and date of expiration. Provide sufficient potable water (*AWA section 3.10*). Remove excreta (including scooping of litter boxes) and food waste to prevent soiling of cats (*AWA 3.11*). Spot clean cage or pen (including cage/ pen walls, resting boards, resting boxes, and queening boxes) daily or as needed . If spot cleaning will require hosing, cats must either be taken out of the cage/pen/run during hosing or there must be enough space in the pen or on the resting boards for animals to avoid becoming wet (*AWA 3.11*). Record minimum and maximum temperatures. Clean and organize room . Record completion of room tasks, initial, and date.

Biweekly :

The following must be done once every two weeks not to exceed 14 days. Clean and disinfect cages and gang pens. Cats must be removed from the cage/pen to prevent them from coming in contact with the disinfectant. Clean and disinfect feeders, water receptacles, resting boxes, queening boxes, litter boxes and resting boards (*AWA section3.11*). Refer to AV House Keeping policy for cleaning of room utensils. Clean and

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disinfect or change environmental enrichment. Disposable items should be discarded as soon as they are worn or soiled.

Quarterly (at least every 3 months):

Clean and disinfect the animal room/secondary enclosure

Facilities:

Temperature alarms must be installed in all rooms housing cats. Room temperature range for cats is 64-84 F (*Guide*, pg. 44). If the temperature falls outside this range for longer than a brief period, Facilities Management must be contacted. Minimum of 10-15 fresh room air exchanges are required (*Guide*, pg. 46).

"Floors should be moisture-resistant, nonabsorbent, impact-resistant, and relatively smooth..." (*Guide*, pg. 137). Refer to AV Physical Plant and Facilities Maintenance policy.

Caging:

Recommended floor space per cat - see chart below (*Guide*, pg. 59, *AWA 3.6(b)*). Caging must be in good condition and free of any damage that may cause injury.

All primary enclosures must include litter boxes filled with a sufficient amount of clean litter to contain excreta. Primary enclosures must also contain resting surfaces that are large enough to hold all occupants at the same time, comfortably. Resting surfaces must be raised, impervious to moisture, easy to clean, sanitize or replace when needed.

Cat Space Requirements:

| Weight of Animal | Floor Area/Animal (sq. ft.) | Height (inches) |
|---------------------------|--|------------------------|
| < or equal to 4 kilograms | 3.0 | 24 |
| >4 kilograms | 4.0 | 24 |
| Queens w/ nursing kittens | Requires additional space (each kitten requires at least a 5% increase to the queen's minimum floor space <i>AWA 3.6 bCiii</i>) | 24 |

Minimum floor space excludes any food or water pans. Litter pans may be included in floor space if properly cleaned and sanitized. Resting boards that are low to ground in which an animal may not occupy comfortably beneath can be counted as floor space.

Identification:

Cats (weaned kittens and older) must be individually identified in addition to having an appropriately labeled cage card (refer to AV Identification of Animals policy). Cats can be permanently identified with a collar and tag, ear tattoo or microchip. If cats are micro-chipped, the reader must be readily available and functional. It is preferred that

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kittens removed from the queen prior to weaning age be identified, this may occur for experimental use or veterinary care related procedures.

Environmental Enrichment:

Refer to the Standard of Care for Environmental Enrichment. For cats specifically the following applies: "Each primary enclosure housing cats must contain a resting surface or surfaces that, in the aggregate, are large enough to hold all the occupants of the primary enclosure at the same time comfortably" *AWA 3.6(4)*. Cats should be provided with the ability to demonstrate species-typical behavior. Some examples of enrichment for cats include: balls, toys with catnip, scratch posts, cardboard boxes, cat beds. Devices used for environmental enrichment must be easily cleaned and disinfected or disposable. Devices must be checked regularly for wear and discarded when safety hazards are observed. Devices must be checked regularly for wear and discarded if they pose a safety hazard.

Social Housing:

Single housing of social species should be considered the exception and justified based on experimental requirements or veterinary-related concerns about animal well-being. Whenever possible cats should be socially housed based on compatibility (*AWA 3.6(2)*) and when they cannot the period of time should be kept to a minimum and those animals should be offered positive interaction with animal care staff and offered additional enrichment items (*Guide pg. 64*).