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**Title: Husbandry Care for Snakes**

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I. Purpose:

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

II. Policy:

All departments providing care for snakes must meet or exceed these minimum requirements.

III. Procedure:

**Daily: (365 days a year without exception)**

Check each primary enclosure and observe each animal for health problems. Check light timers, and heat devices which should be on for 12-18 hours per day. The temperature of the holding room should range from 70-85°F and be recorded daily. Water must be changed daily. Record deaths and euthanasia on the room log sheet. Check all snakes for identification matching the cage card (can be in the form of a unique ID number or letter or markings on the animal). Document the room activities on room log sheet (feeding, animal number, room temperature). There must be a cover on floor drains at all times to prevent a snake from going down the drain.

**Weekly:**

Snakes should be fed weekly as appropriate for the species.

If supplemental heating is provided, cage level temperature should be minimally checked on a weekly basis to ensure an adequate temperature gradient in the cage. Temperate and tropical species tolerate daytime ranges between 78-86°F, whereas desert species generally tolerate a temperature range from 85-92°F. All temperatures within the primary enclosure are dependent on species and may vary depending on the optimal conditions recommended.

## UC Davis Office of the Attending Veterinarian Standards of Care

Desert species tolerate humidity levels between 30-50%, subtropical species from 60-80%, and tropical species 80-90%. Humidity levels should be at the level of the primary enclosure and appropriate for the species and checked weekly.

### Biweekly:

Disinfect and sanitize water bowls and change the bedding substrate within the primary enclosure. If the bedding becomes wet from the bowl being spilled it should be changed more often to provide a dry surface. If there are feces present before the two week bedding change the feces should be removed and bedding substrate changed.

Sweep/squeegee floors to remove dust, dirt, and excess water. Wipe down shelves used for housing when containers are removed for washing. Follow the UCD House Keeping Policy.

### Monthly:

Primary enclosures should be cleaned and disinfected monthly. Disinfectants must be used carefully and sparingly around snakes.

Bleach may be used as a disinfectant. The bleach must be thoroughly rinsed from the inside of the primary enclosure before re-using to house snakes.

### Feeding:

Snakes should be fed dead feed. This can be in the form of freshly euthanized or previously frozen mice or other small mammal as appropriate for species.

Frozen mice should be thawed completely and warmed to room temperature prior to being fed. DO NOT THAW THE DAY BEFORE. The mice should be thawed in warm water and placed in the cage while still warm. Do NOT microwave the mice to thaw or warm them.

Any uneaten food should be removed in 24 hours. Only freshly thawed or freshly euthanized food should be fed.

### Identification:

Each holding tank should be properly labeled with an individual cage card that includes animal identification, project Investigator name and approved protocol number. If animals do not have an identifying mark or microchip, the cage card should include a description of the animal pattern or coloration to differentiate from others in the room.

### Facilities:

Floors should be moisture-resistant, nonabsorbent, impact-resistant, and relatively smooth. After all animals leave the facility anything that was used to house the animals

must be disinfected prior to a new group of animals coming into the facility.

Temperature, Humidity and Illumination:

Heating and air in snake rooms should be controlled in a manner that supports species specific needs. Use of in cage heating devices is discouraged. Variations in cage temperatures that are controlled via heating devices should be on timers. Humidity at the room level does not directly impact the snakes however high levels of humidity can be detrimental to electronic equipment. Regular monitoring of the HVAC system is important and is best performed at the room level.

Illumination schedules should be limited to a duration that will not compromise the well-being of the species being housed. Supplemental lighting providing UVA/B lighting is recommended for most reptiles. This lighting should be provided as appropriate for species and monitored for proper functioning.

Caging:

The primary enclosure should be constructed of non-porous material that can be cleaned and disinfected regularly and allow for daily observation of the animals. The primary enclosure must provide a safe environment that is not constructed with material that may cause injury to the animal. Snakes should be housed so primary enclosure requirements meets the general needs of the individual or group. This should be based on species needs, behavior, and goals of the study.