OFFICE OF ANIMAL CARE AND USE (OACU)
INFORMATIONAL MEMO
November 2014

In order to provide better service to our Principal Investigators (PI), research staff, and administrative managers, the Office of Animal Care and Use (OACU) has compiled this informational memo. New or recently revised Guidelines/SOPs/Policies can be found at the bottom of the memo. Please ensure that your research staff is aware of these changes. Feel free to call the OACU staff if you have any questions about any items in this memo.

Prevent Non-Compliance and Protocol Drift – Amend Your Animal Care Application (ACAP) BEFORE Conducting New Procedures

All research personnel working with animals must know the details described in the approved ACAP. Confirm that the protocol number listed on an animal’s cage card corresponds with the approved protocol before conducting any activity on that animal.

Ensure that all research personnel are familiar with all aspects of the application for procedures they will conduct. Researchers may only modify procedures after submitting an application amendment and receiving Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval. Examples of unacceptable "protocol drift" which have been reported to the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (a branch of NIH) in the past year include:

- Change in the type of euthanasia, anesthesia, or analgesia
- Failure to administer analgesics according to the frequency and duration described in ACAP
- Change in the type or dose of drug administered
- Failure to adhere to early removal criteria (humane endpoints) defined in an approved ACAP
- Allowing personnel not listed on the ACAP to work with animals
- Conducting pilot studies and unapproved procedures, surgeries, or techniques

Please remember that any changes to the approved ACAP must be approved in advance by the IACUC. Submit an amendment to describe any anticipated changes to your ACAP. Do not initiate new practices until your amendment is approved and you have received written confirmation from the IACUC.

Plan carefully when completing your ACAP. Be sure to include all potential techniques you will utilize and a wide variety of anesthetic and analgesic options in order to avoid submitting numerous amendments later. The purpose of amendments is to allow investigators the opportunity to request changes or minor additions to the application, many of which were not anticipated when the
application was initially submitted. If you are unsure whether an amendment is needed or not, please contact OACU at 919-966-5569 for assistance.

Please review your current application at the time of its annual review to ascertain that all necessary information is contained in the application. Although the amendment approval process normally takes 1 to 2 weeks, the IACUC can process amendments more rapidly when necessary.

Return and Processing Dirty Cages

It is critical that researchers remove all live animals and animal carcasses from cages prior to placing dirty cages on the return rack in DLAM facilities. Upon discovering an animal carcass in a cage processed through cage wash and/or autoclave, it is impossible to determine whether the animal was alive or dead prior to processing. Therefore, the IACUC must work under the premise that the animal was alive at the time of processing.

The IACUC has recently investigated several concerns regarding this issue, often leading to reports of non-compliance initially submitted to the Vice Chancellor for Research and then filed with the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW). Further incidents of mouse carcasses remaining in cages after autoclave or cage wash processing could jeopardize the institution’s standing with the federal funding and regulatory agencies and lead OLAW to impose serious sanctions on the University’s Animal Care and Use Program.

Please review the Rodent Carcass Disposal Policy with each of your lab members. Investigators and laboratory personnel should be aware that violation of this policy is unacceptable and further instances of non-compliance will be brought to the attention of the IACUC, the Vice Chancellor for Research, and the investigator’s Department Chair.

Placement of Cages on the Rack

There have been recurring incidents of animal cages placed onto the rack backwards. Improper cage placement causes the cage to press against the water valve (lixit) and result in flooding of cages below. This has caused the death of several animals. These incidents, resulting from human error, have been reported to OLAW.

It is critical that research personnel be vigilant and properly place all cages on the rack in the correct position to avoid problems such as flooding and potential death or injury of animals.

AAALAC Accreditation Status and Post AAALAC Site Visit Reminders

We have received official word from the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care (AAALAC) International that the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Animal Care Program has received continued Full Accreditation. Thank you to everyone who prepared for and participated in the August 2014 AAALAC site visit.
The IACUC, Division of Laboratory Animal Medicine (DLAM), and Environment Health and Safety have been working to resolve the Suggestions for Improvement (SFI) identified by the AAALAC site visit team during their August visit. Noted below are several SFIs discussed during the exit briefing as well as other issues that were identified by site visitors. We are asking for your assistance with addressing these issues in a timely manner.

- **SFI** - Eyewashes in investigator laboratories must be checked and flushed monthly. The laboratory is responsible for maintaining documentation for these monthly checks.
- **SFI** - Researchers who utilize a charcoal canister (e.g., F/AIR) to absorb excess waste gas during Isoflurane administration must weigh the canisters and document the weight before and after each use to ensure they are within manufacturer’s specified limits (e.g., less than X grams above initial weight). Researchers must also ensure correct usage of charcoal canisters depending on manufacturer’s recommendations. For example, some canisters should not be operated standing upright, as the exhaust port for filtered air is on the bottom, while other canisters have exhaust ports on top.
- **SFI** – Personnel who prepare hazardous chemicals such as MS-222 and urethane must adhere to proper occupational health safety procedures such as proper Personal Protective Equipment and use of chemical fume hoods. Please ensure that your staff review each Chemical Hazard pertaining to the work they perform in your laboratory.
- **Other issues** - Pre-, intra-, and post-procedural monitoring: The AAALAC site visitors encouraged us to create a standard form and/or cage card for use by our researchers conducting procedures that require anesthesia and monitoring. This approach should decrease the chances that researchers will forget to document each of the required data points throughout the procedure. We are working to create a standardized Procedure Record to assist researchers in documenting required information including: establishment of surgical plane of anesthesia (or lack of toe pinch reflex), each anesthetic & analgesic administration (including drug, date, dose, and frequency), as well as other pre-, intra-, and post-operative parameters. Once this document is reviewed and approved by DLAM Veterinarians and our IACUC, we will work to make it available to researchers and provide training during semiannual and informational laboratory inspections. Please be on the lookout in the coming months for a memo detailing this new process.

**UNC-CH Center for Bioethics**

Through the North Carolina Translational and Clinical Sciences (NC TraCS) Institute, the Center for Bioethics offers confidential research ethics consultation, including consultation regarding animal research. To read more about these services or find out how to request a consultation, please see the website: [http://bioethics.unc.edu/consultation/](http://bioethics.unc.edu/consultation/).

**New and Updated Institutional Animal Care and Use (IACUC) Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures**

All policies and guidelines described below can be accessed through the IACUC website on the Policies and Procedures page and at [http://research.unc.edu/offices/iacuc/important-notices/](http://research.unc.edu/offices/iacuc/important-notices/). Please make a point of checking back frequently as the OACU posts revised documents and other important information here on a regular basis.
Policies:

Policy on Adoption of Companion Animals: This Policy was revised to include rodent species. ACAP will also be updated to inform researchers that Section 5.1.1.d in ACAP is intended to describe all possible disposition of surplus animals. This should not be interpreted as final approval for adoption at the will of the investigator. All animal adoptions MUST include a DLAM Veterinarian exam and the adoptee must complete an Adoption Agreement form that can be obtained from the OACU. Also, the word “transgenic” has been replaced with “genetically modified” to include animals that are transgenic and/or knock-out.

Paralytics Policy: Monitoring Animals which have received Neuromuscular Blocking Agents (NMB): In this revision, we reorganized the policy for clarity and updated statements to reflect language in the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals 8th edition.

Animal Transport and Biosecurity Policy: This policy was revised in response to issues raised by the AAALAC site visitors. The revised version clarifies guidance on the use of private vehicles for transport and provides instructions for different types of animal transport.

Guidelines:

Mouse Anesthesia & Analgesia Formulary- Added Extended and Sustained Release Buprenorphine [Extended Release (ER) & Sustained Release (SR)]

Rat Anesthesia & Analgesia Formulary- Added Extended and Sustained Release Buprenorphine (ER & SR)

Updated Laboratory Postings:

UNC Emergency Contacts and Telephone Numbers - Previous versions of this document were printed on light blue paper, and should be replaced with this updated version.

Reporting Animal Mistreatment or Animal Use Application Noncompliance - Previous versions of this document were printed on lime green paper, and should be replaced with this updated version.

The OACU Training and Compliance team has been distributing these revised postings during routine inspections. If you have not already received a new copy, please print and post in all areas where animal work is conducted.

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