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UNIVERSITY STANDARD

Title

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL STANDARD ON DISPOSAL OF RODENT CARCASSES

Introduction

PURPOSE

The standards and procedures described below provide guidance to all researchers and animal handlers for safely disposing of rodent carcasses across UNC research animal facilities.

SCOPE OF APPLICABILITY

All personnel engaged in the euthanasia of laboratory rodents and/or disposal of carcasses. The standards described in this document apply to the euthanasia and carcass disposal of all laboratory rodents.

It is essential to follow these procedures to ensure that animals are humanely euthanized, and that personnel coming into contact with rodent carcasses are not exposed to chemical, radioactive, or biological hazards.

The UNC-CH IACUC expects that anyone involved in animal work at the University will comply with this Standard. Requests for exceptions to this Standard must be reviewed and approved by the IACUC and/or DLAM Management.

Standard

Research personnel **MUST** remove all animals, dead or alive, from the cage before leaving the cage in Division of Laboratory Animal Medicine (DLAM) for autoclave or cage wash processing.

It is essential to euthanize all animals properly. Research personnel **MUST** ensure death before placing animal carcass(es) in the designated carcass containers, located in designated carcass refrigerators/freezers within DLAM facilities.

1. Empty cages must be returned to DLAM promptly, following their removal from the DLAM facility. Cages (including empty cages) must remain covered while outside the animal facility or lab space (including hallways, during transport, etc.)
2. Following euthanasia (injectable or inhalational) and before disposal, ensure death by performing an approved secondary method. Approved secondary methods include 1) major



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organ harvest, 2) thoracotomy, 3) cervical dislocation, and 4) decapitation. See [UNC-IACUC Standard on Rodent Euthanasia](#) for exceptions to secondary physical method requirement.

3. Place the carcass(es) in a non-PVC containing, sealable, transparent plastic bag. These plastic bags are supplied by DLAM and are located in the CO₂ chamber area and supply carts.
4. **Label the bag with the application identification (protocol) number *only*.** Seal the bag securely. Place the bag with the carcass(es) into the DLAM carcass container (ex: Stericycle box) located within designated carcass refrigerators/freezers in each building. (Note: carcasses from DLAM diagnostic testing will be labeled 'DLAM necropsy', and carcasses euthanized via the Euthanex Smartbox System will be labelled 'ESB'.)
5. Provide the requested information on the tracking log located on the exterior of the carcass refrigerator/freezer. All carcasses are incinerated unless they require special handling procedures as defined by Environment, Health and Safety (EHS) on the IACUC hazard forms.
6. Animals containing some radioactive agents or chemical agents that are classified as hazardous waste must be stored according to EHS recommendations. EHS will retrieve and dispose of these carcasses as defined on the IACUC hazard forms.

EXCEPTIONS

Requests for exceptions to this Standard must be reviewed and approved by the IACUC and/or DLAM Management.

References:

IACUC approved Standards:

- Carbon Dioxide Euthanasia. [Click](#)
- Rat and Mouse Euthanasia. [Click](#)

Definitions

IACUC: Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

DLAM: Division of Laboratory Animal Medicine

University Standard: The minimum acceptable limits or rules used to achieve Policy implementation, enforceable by the IACUC.

Carcass: The body of a dead animal.

Euthanasia: The act of inducing humane death in an animal with minimal pain and distress.



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Related Requirements

EXTERNAL REGULATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES: Failure to comply with this standard may result in a report filed by the University, to the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) and possible sanctions on the investigator.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES, STANDARDS, AND PROCEDURES

For more detailed guidance, please refer to the [University Policy on the Care and Use of Vertebrate Animals for Research, Training and Teaching Purposes](#).

Contact Information

Subject	Contact	Telephone	Email
Biosecurity Hazardous agents	Environment, Health and Safety (EHS)	919-962-5507	
Animal Health and Husbandry	DLAM	919-962-5335	

Important Dates

Effective Date and title of Approver: 9/25/02; UNC IACUC

Revision and Review Dates, Change notes, title of Reviewer or Approver: February 29, 2004; September 14, 2007; August 5, 2010, June 2013, June 2017.

Approved by: UNC IACUC

Dr. Mitchell Picker
UNC IACUC Chair

6/2017