

Animal Observation and Record Keeping General Policy

The wellbeing of research animals depends upon careful and frequent observation and monitoring of these animals by investigators and research staff. Every IACUC-approved protocol must include a plan for observation and monitoring of animals for signs of pain or distress based upon the research procedures performed on the animals and the possible effect of the procedures on animal health and wellbeing. Observation and monitoring by the investigator/research staff is in addition to the observation and monitoring performed by the attending veterinarian. All observations, treatments, and procedures must be documented in the individual animal medical record for USDA-regulated species. These include rabbits, guinea pigs, and hamsters (see <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ac/policy/policy3.pdf>). Non-USDA covered species (e.g. Laboratory rats of the genus *Rattus*, mice of the genus *Mus*, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish) do not require individual animal records. However, these species must have group medical/husbandry records. These records should be kept in the animal room and must be available for the veterinarian and/or IACUC to review upon request.

Animals held in individual laboratories

Per Public Health Service Policy, all vertebrate animals **must be checked daily** including weekends, holidays, and inclement weather. Animals must be checked during weather related emergencies (see Policy: Weather Related Emergencies). PIs should plan accordingly.

Laboratories housing similar species may wish to coordinate animal care such that only one person needs to come in to check animals.

Individual Animal Medical Record

The individual animal medical record serves as:

- A permanent record of animal health and research results;
- A means of communication among the research team, and between the research team and the veterinarian;
- Documentation of adherence to the protocol and standards of veterinary medical care; and documentation of compliance with regulations and standards required by the Animal Welfare Act and Public Health Service Policy. Note: all pages of the medical record must include the full date, including the year, in ink;
- Daily clinical records on individual animals must be held for at least one (3) years. If investigators do not want to maintain the records in their lab for this amount of time,

the records must be turned over to the veterinarian so that state and federal regulations can be upheld.

Investigators/Research Technicians Responsibilities

Whenever investigators/research technicians observe or perform procedures on animals, the general health status as well as any treatment, medications, or procedures performed must be documented in the daily clinical record for the animal. Post-procedural cage cards must be used for rodents and lower vertebrates when invasive protocol-related procedures or anesthesia are used. This card must include the date, procedure performed, contact person and his or her contact information. Research staffs are responsible for observing animals for signs of pain or distress following experimental procedures, as specified in the IACUC-approved protocol. All entries made into the individual animals health record need to be dated and initialed *in ink* by the person making the notation. The final disposition of the animal or method of euthanasia, including dose and route of any euthanasia agent administered, must be recorded in the individual animals health record.