



GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE MEDICINE

University of South Alabama
College of Medicine
Department of Comparative Medicine

The Department of Comparative Medicine (DCM) is committed to maintaining a high quality animal care program in support of biomedical research at the University of South Alabama (USA). DCM adheres to all federal, state, local, and institutional laws, regulations, and guidelines relating to the care and use of laboratory animals. These policies are enforced by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

The following information is provided to all investigators who plan to use animals in a research program or demonstration exercise. These guidelines are intended to provide general information for investigators. When more detailed information or consultation is desired, research faculty and technicians are encouraged to call the DCM office at 460-6239.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Normal working hours for the vivarium are from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Animal husbandry coverage and veterinary care is provided 365 days a year, and after-hours, if needed.

The vivarium is under restricted access. Access is granted only to personnel listed on an IACUC-approved animal use protocol. A coded FOB is required for access into the facility and to specific, pre-approved animal rooms. FOBs are not to be loaned to anyone. Each protocol associate needs their own FOB. Contact Howard Shell (460-6046) for an application form for a FOB.

Arrangements for the purchase or transfer of animals to USA must be made through DCM. Information is available through the DCM regarding selection of appropriate animal models for specific research projects. Information is also available on the selection of anesthetics and analgesics, procedures using animals, therapeutic agents, and other related topics. Consultation may be arranged by contacting the DCM office.

Information on estimates of future costs for purchasing and maintaining research animals is available from the DCM office. It is strongly recommended that investigators avail themselves of this service during the planning stages of their research project to ensure that all animal-related costs (procurement, *per diem* charges and technical assistance or service fees) are considered.

Training prior to the initiation of an animal study is required by the IACUC. Please contact the IACUC office for information at 460-6863. Additional training by DCM faculty and staff for investigators and/or technicians who are unfamiliar with animal care and procedures is available upon request. ***This training is available at no charge to the investigator and laboratory personnel.*** To schedule a consultation or to request additional training, contact the DCM office at 460-6239.

ANIMAL USE PROTOCOLS

All research projects involving the use of animals must be reviewed and approved by the IACUC prior to such use. Assistance in the preparation of IACUC protocols is available from DCM faculty. Please contact the DCM office or the veterinarian at 460-6239.

- Contact the IACUC Compliance Specialist for information on creating an online protocol submission in IRBnet.
- If the protocol is approved, a number will be assigned to the Protocol. This protocol number must be included in all matters pertaining to this specific protocol.
- If a minor change in the IACUC-approved protocol is needed, an amendment to the original protocol must be submitted to the IACUC. IACUC-approval of the amendment is *REQUIRED* before implementing any change. **DCM faculty CAN NOT, under any circumstances, approve changes to protocols.**
- If a major change in the experimental procedure or a change in the species to be used is anticipated, a new Animal Use Protocol must be submitted to the IACUC for review and approval.
- There are a number of IACUC Policies, Guidelines, or other informative documents available on the IACUC website. <http://www.southalabama.edu/researchcompliance/animalcareprocedures.html>

ANIMAL PROCUREMENT

Animals may be ordered by submitting an Animal Requisition form. Telephone requests for the procurement of animals cannot be processed.

Animals can be purchased from approved vendors only. If you need to bring in animals from another academic institution, please contact the DCM office for instructions. You can also refer to the “Animal Requisition Policy” for more details:

<http://www.southalabama.edu/researchcompliance/pdf/dcmanimalreq.pdf>

REPORTING ANIMAL ILLNESS OR INJURY

Routine daily observations are performed by animal care personnel in each animal research facility. If sick or injured animals are observed, a “Sick Animal Report” is completed by the animal technician and is submitted to the licensed veterinary technician or the veterinarian for action. Investigators will be notified of the illness or injury.

If an investigator or research technician observes an ill or injured animal, he or she should notify the facility supervisor or an animal technician as soon as possible so that veterinary care can be provided.

There is no charge for veterinary care of vivarium-housed animals. If a supervisor or technician is not immediately available, the individual should contact the DCM office (during normal working hours), or (if after normal hours or on weekends/holidays) call the veterinarian and/or supervisor on-call. On-call phone numbers are posted on the window of the supervisor’s office, next to the elevator.

ANIMAL DISPOSAL

If an animal is found deceased by DCM personnel, it will be placed into a plastic bag, identified with the PI name and date, and placed in the appropriate animal holding cooler/freezer. The PI will be notified.

If a protocol associate finds an animal dead in its cage, the facility supervisor should be notified so that the animal's death can be recorded.

Carcasses and animal tissue is to be put into a plastic bag and placed in the walk-in freezer. All bags should be labeled. Carcasses are incinerated.

ANCILLARY SERVICES

DCM is staffed with personnel trained in the proper handling and restraint of laboratory animals. Additionally, they are qualified to perform a wide variety of technical procedures including administering medications and materials by oral and injectable routes, obtaining blood and other specimen samples, and other procedures.

Assistance with these procedures, on a fee-for-service basis, may be requested by calling or emailing the DCM office or the facility supervisor. ***Teaching research staff and/or students how to properly perform a procedure is NOT considered "technical assistance" and the PI will NOT be charged for instruction and initial oversight of experimental procedures.*** Late or last minute requests for technical assistance are discouraged and will be honored on an "as-available" basis, depending upon the availability of DCM personnel.

Experimental necropsy, tissue harvest, clinical pathology, surgery, and radiographic services are available on a fee-for-service basis upon request by contacting the DCM office. ***Necropsy to determine an unexpected cause of death is provided free of charge as part of veterinary care.***

Consultation services regarding veterinary medical care, anesthesia, euthanasia, program development, and budgetary development are available, without cost, by contacting the DCM office.