

**TITLE: Sick Animal Notification Process****SOP Category: Veterinary****RUAC SOP #: 7.03****Page: 1 of 5****Effective Date: 9/27/2024****Approval:***Jeetendra Eswaraka***Revisions: 8/30/2021, 10/4/2021**

SCOPE: This SOP applies to all Animal Care Staff (ACS), ACS Supervisors (ACSS), Veterinary Staff (VS), Principal Investigator (PI) and Research Staff members (RS).

OBJECTIVE: The goal of this SOP is to establish and provide a consistent process for the communication of sick research animals across the Rutgers Animal Care Program. Sick research animals are typically identified during cage changes, daily welfare checks, experimental procedures, or routine observation rounds.

PROCEDURES:

When animals with health-related issues are identified by ACS during daily husbandry checks, the following process of assessment and communication is followed:

1. Where a sick animal is identified, the observer places a sick animal notification card in the cage card holder of the cage that the animal is housed in.
2. ACSS, ACS, or VS scans the QR code on the radio frequency identification (RFID) cage card using an electronic device, such as a smartphone or assigned tablet, which links to the Digital Vivarium™ website and require them to log in using their Rutgers NetID and password.
3. Select the "Health" data entry option to start a health concern report, and input the number of sick animals identified in the cage, animal identification if this information is available, and select the appropriate issue(s) observed before submitting the case.
4. VS gets an automated email from the Digital Vivarium Notification system, performs an assessment of the medical condition and address according to CMR SOP #7.02 Common Rodent Health Problems and Treatments or current standard of veterinary practice. All sick animals must be evaluated by VS or by ACS in consultation with VS within 24 hours.
 - a. VS replaces the sick animal notification card with a treatment card, indicating the investigator, Case ID, Cage ID, start date of the condition, observed conditions, recommended treatment and frequency/timeline of said treatment for this case.
 - b. VS removes the sick card and issues a chronic condition sticker (if applicable) on the RFID cage card, indicating the chronic health issue and starting date of said issue.
5. VS, or ACS where applicable, then issues an email notification to the PI and RS contact describing the medical condition, providing a recommendation for

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treatment and a time frame for which action needs to be taken. Time frame for action may include:

- a. **Urgent, critical and/or life threatening** – Immediate attention required
 1. Note: VS maintains the regulatory authority to perform or direct euthanasia of life-threatening critical cases without prior approval of a researcher. Where possible, carcasses will be preserved by refrigeration for up to three days to allow researchers to collect tissues if applicable.
 - b. **Non-urgent critical condition** – Must be addressed within 24 hours.
 - c. **Stable Condition** – Assess and recommend treatment plan. Animal treatments will begin within 24 hours.
6. Multiple sick cases for the same colony in the same room may be addressed with a single email notification.
- a. The unique Case ID and/or Cage ID will be provided for each case to assist the RS/ACS with the direction for how each case is to be addressed.
7. The PI or RS, on receiving a sick animal notification email may respond in the following manner:
- a. Euthanize an animal in place of conducting treatment to prevent unrelieved pain or distress.
 - b. Accept and follow the VS prescribed treatment plan with documentation of treatments provided on the back of the provided treatment card. If the animals are in an acute study, the PI or RS may request consultation with a facility veterinarian to decide the best option of treatment course.
8. In the event a research team member observes a sick animal prior to receiving an email notification from VS, they may:
- a. Place a sick animal notification card on the cage and notify VS via email that an animal needs to be medically evaluated.
 - b. Independently euthanize prior to veterinary assessment and without initiation of treatment.
 1. Where this situation occurs, the sick animal notification card MUST be marked with the following information: EUTHANIZED BY (Researcher NAME), DATE of euthanasia, and Cage ID.
 2. The sick card can be left in place on the cage card holder where the cage remains in place OR returned to VS or the ACSS.
9. If the investigator or RS fails to respond or cannot be reached within 24 hours for non-critical cases, the recommended treatment or euthanasia based on clinical assessment will be performed by VS/ACS.
10. Failure to follow the prescribed and/or agreed upon treatment plan or ignoring an email notification from VS is considered failure to provide adequate veterinary care and is considered a non-compliant action subject to IACUC investigation and action.
11. All treatment cards are considered part of the medical records and should be returned to RUAC if all affected animals are euthanized by RS. Otherwise, treatment cards should remain on cages until removed by VS when the cases are resolved.

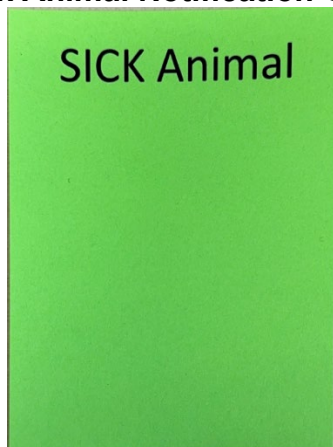
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12. In the event of an internet outage where the scanning of the QR code and submission of the health concerns report is not feasible:
 - a. Where a sick animal is identified, the observer places a sick animal notification card in the cage card holder that the animal is housed in. On the notification card document: date, number of affected animals, and health issue observed.
 - b. ACSS or ACS notifies VS that there is a sick animal in a specific facility/location either in-person or via phone. ACSS/ACS should include the following information when reporting to VS: Building/Room number, PI, health issue observed, and if it is an urgent/emergency case.
 - c. VS performs an assessment of the medical condition and address as per the standard practice mentioned in Step 4 above.
 - d. RS staff will be notified by VS at the first available opportunity.

Sick Animal Notification Card



QR code on RFID Cage Card

RFID# AAAAC0010223010800000385	
Order#: Request #: 2405 Prot # 999900264	
Room# 145 PI: Bright, Lauren Contact: Mariel Nigro 646-423-4972 Vendor: Species: Multiple- Non-USDA Strain: Sex: M or F Arr/Wean Date: DOB/Weight: / Animal ID: _____	
Cage Card ID# 192970 	

Treatment Card

CMR Health Alert						
Investigator: _____						
Sick #: _____						
Cage ID: _____						
Start Date: _____						
Condition(s): _____						
Vet Staff Observations: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____						
CMR Health Alert						
Monitor	Treat	Euthanasia				
Daily	Mon/Wed/Fri	1x/week				
Treatment(s):						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Euthanized by lab; Date & Initials:						

Chronic Sticker



Generating Health Case on Digital Vivarium™ Interface

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RUTGERSDigital Vivarium™My HomeLog off

Auxiliary Input For a Cage ID:

Select Type of Data to Enter

Born AnimalsOvercrowdingEuthanasia

HealthDead Animals

Cage Details

- Protocol:
- Species: Multiple- Non-USDA
- PI:
- Contact:

Report Health Concerns

Number of animals affected *

Animal IDs

Submit Case

Anatomical Reference

Back

LeftRight

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

Belly

RightLeft

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

Issue

☐ Abnormal Feces/Urine

☐ Dystocia

☐ Ear(s)

☐ Eye(s)

☐ Hunched Posture

☐ Hydrocephalus

☐ Flooded cage

☐ Limb/Tail Injury or Deformity

☐ Malocclusion

☐ Mass

☐ Moribund

☐ Neurological symptoms/seizures/limb paralysis

☐ Prolapse

☐ Respiratory Distress

☐ Skin

☐ Surgical Complications

☐ Other

Emergency: ☐

Health Reporting History

Case ID	Date Observed	Issues	Animal IDs	# of Animals Affected	Created by
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Overview of Sick Animal Cases and Timelines			
Category	Description	Approximate Timeline	Common Examples
A. Urgent Critical	Animal appears in critical condition, suffering and likely will not survive until the end of the day.	IMMEDIATE, RUAC may give the research staff 1-2 hours to assess or euthanize for humane reasons.	Laterally recumbent; BCS <1; severe dystocia; dyspnea or abnormal breathing; severe fighting wounds with exposed muscle or bone; paralysis, etc.
B. Non-urgent Critical	Animal appears in serious condition that is not immediately life threatening, with no possibility of recovery or improvement with treatment or has reached an end point in the study.	End of day to 24 hours depending on severity. Endpoint cases will usually be 24 hours.	Tumor endpoints; eye ulceration; rectal prolapse endpoints; non-research related seizures; severe ulcerative dermatitis (infected/bone exposure), etc.; moderate malocclusion; penile prolapse; tumor development unrelated to research.
C. Stable Condition with Treatment	Treatment option is necessary for the sick case; treatments should be started within 24 hours of notification. Research staff/ACS/VS (as applicable per campus) is responsible for treating their animals in order to maintain the animal in their colony.	Treatment until condition is fully resolved, or elective euthanasia.	Moderate fighting wounds; moderate ulcerative dermatitis; mild rectal prolapse; conjunctivitis; mild malocclusion.
D. Stable Condition	Animals can be monitored and possibly treated for illness that will likely not become worse.	Treatment or monitor for changes in health status.	Cataract; porphyrin staining in rats; mild or superficial fighting wounds.
Please note this should be used as a general guideline; CMR reserves the authority to deviate from these guidelines based on specific case-by-case basis.			
At all times, researchers reserve the right to contact CMR to request a sick animal be euthanized during working hours or to euthanize their own animals prior to or after veterinary consult.			
At all times, veterinary staff have the authority to change a treatment course based on the at minimum weekly reevaluations of these sick animals.			