

**TITLE: Reporting of Animal Welfare Cases to IACUC****SOP Category: Veterinary****RUAC SOP #: 7.20****Page: 1 of 3****Effective Date: 4/20/2025****Approval:** *Bhupinder Singh***Revisions: 4/7/2023****SCOPE:**

This document describes the situations in which cases of animal welfare should be promptly reported to the IACUC. This SOP applies to all Animal Care Staff (ACS), ACS Supervisors (ACSS), Veterinary Staff (VS), and Research Staff members (RS) at the Rutgers University facilities.

**OBJECTIVE:**

The objective is to describe situations regarding animal welfare that **must** be reported to the IACUC. This SOP provides general instructions and specific examples of reportable animal welfare issues, along with a timeframe in which the reporting should occur. The IACUC will review events reported to the committee and make the final determination of adverse events, non-compliance, and required corrective actions. This SOP is based on the guidelines set forth by the PHS policy to describe cases in which the IACUC must report to OLAW (NIH Guide Notice NOT-OD-05-034).

**DEFINITIONS**

IACUC-Reportable Adverse Event: An unforeseen occurrence with an observed or potential negative impact on animal welfare. This includes, but is not limited to, excessive pain or distress and an unexpected or unusually high rate of morbidity or mortality of animals covered by the Rutgers University IACUC protocols, Policies, and SOP's.

Non-Compliance: This involves work with animals that is not conducted in accordance with relevant policies, laws, regulations, and standards as well as institutional policies, guidelines, and SOP's. Common examples include conduct of a procedure or use of a compound not listed on an approved IACUC protocol, failure to adhere to humane endpoints, inappropriate housing of animals, or inadequate or inappropriate euthanasia. See below for specific examples of events that would and would not be required to be reported to the IACUC.

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### **PROCEDURES:**

1. Reportable Situations
  - a. Conditions that jeopardize the health or well-being of animals, including natural disasters, accidents, improperly performed husbandry, and mechanical failures (malfunctioning equipment), resulting in actual harm or death to animals.
  - b. Morbidity and/or mortality rates that fall outside of rates defined in the IACUC protocol, if rates are defined in the protocol.
  - c. Unusually high rates of morbidity and/or mortality that, in the judgement of the Attending Veterinarian, are above the rates expected given the experimental procedures and circumstances.
  - d. Conduct of animal-related activities without appropriate IACUC review and approval.
  - e. Failure to adhere to IACUC-approved protocols.
  - f. Implementation of any significant change to IACUC-approved protocols without prior IACUC approval (PHS Policy IV.B.7).
  - g. Conduct of animal-related activities beyond the protocol expiration date established by the IACUC.
  - h. Failure to correct deficiencies identified during the semiannual evaluation in a timely manner.
  - i. Chronic failure to provide space for animals in accordance with recommendations of the *Guide* unless the IACUC has approved a protocol-specific deviation from the *Guide* based on written scientific justification.
  - j. Participation in animal-related activities by individuals who have not been determined by the IACUC to be appropriately qualified and trained (PHS Policy IV.C.1.f.).
  - k. Failure to monitor animals post-procedurally as necessary to ensure well-being (e.g., during recovery from anesthesia or during recuperation from invasive or debilitating procedures).
  - l. Failure to maintain appropriate animal-related records (e.g., identification, medical, husbandry).
  - m. Failure to ensure death of animals after euthanasia procedures (e.g., failed euthanasia with CO<sub>2</sub>).
  - n. Failure of designated staff to carry out veterinary orders (e.g., treatments).
2. Situations Not Normally Required to Be Reported
  - a. Death of animals that have reached the end of their natural life spans.
  - b. Death or failures of neonates to thrive when husbandry and veterinary medical oversight of dams and litters was appropriate.
  - c. Animal death or illness from spontaneous disease when appropriate quarantine, preventive medical, surveillance, diagnostic, and therapeutic procedures were in place and followed.
  - d. Animal death or injuries related to manipulations that fall within parameters described in the IACUC-approved protocol.
  - e. Infrequent incidents of drowning or near-drowning of rodents in cages when it is determined that the cause was water valves jammed with bedding or

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malfunctioned water valves. Frequent problems of this nature, however, *must* be reported promptly along with corrective plans and schedules.

3. Timeframe for Reporting
  - a. Any animal adverse events, non-compliance, and pertinent animal welfare-related medical issues involving animals must be reported to the IACUC immediately upon discovery.
  - b. Failure to report in a timely fashion could lead to additional sanctions from the IACUC.
  - c. All issues can be reported to IACUC via email at [animal-concerns@research.rutgers.edu](mailto:animal-concerns@research.rutgers.edu)
4. Reporting of Animal Welfare Cases can be to your supervisor, the Attending Veterinarian, or the IACUC. See the IACUC's Animal Welfare Concern Reporting (Whistleblower) Policy (#H2) for additional information.

### **References**

- NIH OLAW Guidance on Prompt Reporting to OLAW under the PHS Policy on the Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (NOT-OD-05-034)
- Rutgers University IACUC Policy Documents #H2 and #H8