



Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

## **Policy on Sick and Moribund Animals and Animals Found Dead**

Date Reviewed: 7/26/18

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that sick or moribund animals do not suffer unduly and that proper records are kept for animals that die unexpectedly (i.e. other than through planned euthanasia).

### **POLICY:**

As per UCSC guidelines, all animals must be appropriately monitored to ensure they remain free from undue pain and/or distress. Animals should be monitored as indicated in the approved animal use protocol and more often if their condition deteriorates.

### **AUTHORITY**

The Principal Investigator has primary responsibility for the care and treatment of animals in their protocols and for euthanizing sick and moribund animals. The Principal Investigator can delegate authority to euthanize sick and moribund animals to facility or research staff. The ultimate authority rests with the UCSC veterinarian and the IACUC. In all situations a clear chain of reporting for sick and moribund animals must be established and the specific role of each individual in the chain must be identified.

Sick/moribund animals should be immediately reported to the Vivarium Manager, as well as to the investigator or appointed contact personnel. It is the responsibility of the facility to keep records of sick or sudden death of animals.

### **RESPONSIBILITY:**

It is the responsibility of any person involved in the care and use of animals (staff, students, technicians, grad students, investigators) to follow this policy. With respect to setting and determining endpoints, the responsibility(ies) of each individual should be clearly defined, and a clear chain of reporting established. The ultimate authority for euthanasia rests with the veterinarian and the IACUC.

### **PROCEDURE - Moribund/Sick Animals:**

1. Moribund/sick animals or those animals that appear to be in distress or pain will be reported to the investigator responsible for the animal. The investigator may elect to euthanize the animal. The investigator may determine that samples can be taken at the time of euthanasia that would provide data for the experimental protocol. Any situation regarding a sick or moribund animal or an animal that is in pain/distress where a decision has been made not to euthanize the animal or where no investigator or research associate with the authority to euthanize the animal can be reached requires immediate consultation with the UCSC veterinarian. The veterinarian may prescribe a

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treatment plan for the animal or may require that the animal is euthanized. Sick animals that are not going to be treated for their condition or appropriately monitored should be euthanized immediately.

2. All sick animals will be appropriately flagged at cage level. Any treatments prescribed by the veterinarian should be indicated on a filled-out sick animal cage form
3. All investigators are encouraged to have standing orders already in place with their technical staff regarding the protocol to follow when a moribund or dead animal is found. This allows the technical staff to procure samples and euthanize animals in a quick and humane fashion without delay.

## PROCEDURE - Animals Found Dead

1. Remove the dead animal and identify it by individual marking and cage card information. Identify the investigator and relevant phone numbers.
2. Bag and label the animal and place in the necropsy refrigerator until the investigator can be notified.
3. Alert investigator and facility manager as soon as possible.
4. Attempts should be made to identify the cause of death to determine if the death was preventable and/or due to experimental design. Should the cause of death not be clear, the investigators are encouraged to seek the help of the UCSC veterinarian. All other animals under similar treatment should be closely monitored for signs of illness.
5. The facility manager should keep a record of all animals found dead, with the intent to detect rates of unexpected deaths above normal and flag them for further investigation. These records may be requested by the Animal Care Committee.