

Summary of Exceptions to the Regulations and Standards
Specified and Explained by the Principal Investigator and Approved by the IACUC

1. In a study involving Syrian hamsters, the researcher submitted a memorandum of explanation to the IACUC regarding a change in the cleaning schedule for cages in which his hamsters are housed for particular studies approved previously by the IACUC. This relates to 9 CFR, Ch. 1, Part 3, Subpart B, 3.31.a. This matter was discussed and approved by the IACUC on April 8, 2009. The measure is supported by a policy statement of the Society for the Research on Biological Rhythms which appeared in the Journal of Biological Rhythms, Vol, 8, pp. 97-106 (1993) which outlines and explains modifications of normal observance, cleanliness/sanitation, and food and water provision procedures for rodents in circadian rhythm studies. The change involved delaying cage cleaning for up to three weeks because the stimulus of the cleaning process (new cage, fresh bedding, disrupts free running activity levels developed during the study. These activity levels must be measured over several weeks in the same (unchanged) cage environment. It was agreed that the researcher will monitor closely the cages during these particular studies to insure the environments of the hamsters and mice will be as satisfactory as possible until the data collections are completed. Such observations must be conducted under very dim red illumination. It was agreed by the IACUC and the Director of Animal Care that inactive animals will be visually checked to make sure they are not ill or in distress. Healthy mice and hamsters run many revolutions on a wheel each night, and computer records indicating robust activity are considered adequate verification of each animal's well being.

Exceptions to Social Housing:

2. The importance of social housing has long been recognized at the UMASS Primate Facility and non-human primates are housed in pairs or in larger social groups whenever possible. There are however some exceptions to social housing NHPs for animal welfare reasons approved by the IACUC. Permanent or temporary single housing arrangements are used when there is no other alternative to protect an animal from aggression or for health reasons. Where feasible (based on the animal's health, behavior and level of aggression), cages are positioned so as to allow limited contact between adjacent cages and all singly housed non-human primates can see and hear other familiar animals. For old animals for which it has been impossible to identify a compatible cage partner the arrangement is permanent. All single housed NHPs receive extra-enrichment in the form of toys, foraging opportunities and human contact.
3. A second exception approved by the IACUC allows social isolation of male voles for a 3-day period prior to pairing with females to reduce aggression at the time of pairing. In addition the IACUC has approved singly housing females in cages with soiled male bedding on the day before pairing.

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