

GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF RESTRAINT IN ANIMAL TEACHING AND RESEARCH

PURPOSE:

To define when restraint is appropriate and inform researchers of the acceptable uses of restraint on animal use protocols.

GUIDELINES:

Any deviation from these guidelines must be scientifically justified and approved by the IACUC.

DEFINITION OF RESTRAINT

Restraint is the use of manual, mechanical, or other means to limit some or all of an animal's normal movement for purposes including sample collection, examination, experimental manipulation, and drug administration. In most research applications, animals are only restrained for brief periods. If possible, animals should be trained through positive reinforcement to present limbs or remain immobile for brief procedures.

PROLONGED RESTRAINT

Prolonged restraint implies a period of extended restraint, during which animals might experience physical or psychological distress or discomfort. The definition of prolonged restraint may vary from species to species, depending on the nature of the research and must be avoided unless scientifically necessary for the research process. Approval by the IACUC will require scientific justification for such practices, a description of the restraint device(s) or method(s), duration of restraint, and monitoring procedures and methods to minimize distress to the animal.

RESTRAINT DEVICES

If it is determined that restraint devices are required, they must be appropriately sized and designed and remain operational such that discomfort or injury to both the animal and research staff is minimized. Restraint devices will be reviewed by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and identified in the protocol with a description of the device and the duration of restraint.

Note: Certain circumstances in which wild animals will be held or captured do not directly qualify as restraint devices for the purposes of this policy. Such devices shall only be used during the period of time necessary to collect or measure the animals. When submitting a protocol, the PI must indicate and specify trap monitoring frequency.

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES FOR RESTRAINT OF ANY DURATION

- Restraint devices must be specifically designed to accomplish research goals that are impossible or impractical by other means or to prevent injury to animals or personnel. They must not be used for convenience.
- Restraint shall only be performed for the minimum time necessary to accomplish objectives.
- If possible, animals should be acclimated to the restraint device and personnel. If animals fail to show progression during this process, the animal must be excluded from the study.

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- Observation of the animals must be made at appropriate intervals.
- If lesions or illness develop as a result of restraint, veterinary care shall be provided. The observation of lesions, illness, or drastic behavioral change as a result of restraint may necessitate temporary or permanent removal of the animal from restraint.
- The purpose of restraint and its subsequent duration must be explicitly stated when training personnel involved in the study,
- Alternatives to restraint must be considered when developing the study protocol.