

POLICY REGARDING ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION

PURPOSE:

To define a system of identification for animals used in research, teaching, or training, compliant with the Animal Welfare Act and PHS Policy.

POLICY:

Liberty University IACUC has established the following policy regarding appropriate animal identification practices.

FOR RODENTS AND NON-MAMMALIAN SPECIES:

1. The following information is required for animal identification (at minimum):
 - a. IACUC Protocol #
 - b. PI Name
 - c. Contact Person (If other than PI)
 - d. Species
 - e. Source (vendor, colony, etc.)
2. The animal cage must prominently display the above information. Each animal cage must have its own cage card that uniquely identifies it with respect to any other cages in the study area.
 - a. The animal identification information listed above may be displayed on either:
 - i. Individual cage cards
 - ii. On a sign that clearly pertains to all animals in cages grouped together (on a rack or in the same room, but only if the information is common to all animals)
 - b. Intermixing of cages of animals with different identifying information requires that information be displayed on individual cage cards.
3. If instances where a strain, stock, or mutation is expected to produce a compromised health phenotype (including death), the phenotype or genetic information must be explicitly specified.
4. If animals will require post-procedural health monitoring (post-surgery, special diet or drug administration, viral or radioactive containment), this information, including dates, must be indicated on cage cards through the period of time necessitated.
5. Ear punch, ear tag, microchips, and tattoos are acceptable methods of marking individual animals, and do not require protocol approval.
 - a. Toe-clipping is only allowed with IACUC approval (must have scientific justification) and never after 7 days of age in mice
6. Animals removed from the vivarium (or other means of housing) must be labeled with the time and date of removal, as well as the responsible person.
7. Cages that contain pre-weanling animals must be marked with the date of birth and count of the litters.

FOR NON-RODENT MAMMALS:

Except as follows, the above policy also applies to non-rodent mammals.

1. The unit of identification is the individual animal. One identifying card per animal must be located at the site where the animal is housed.

2. Each animal must be identified according to applicable federal requirements specific to the species (tattoo number, transponder, medallion, etc.).

NUMBERING SYSTEM

Permanent, unique identification of animals at Liberty University is critical for both regulatory and scientific reasons. Maintaining an accurate numbering system will allow for better conduct, as well as appropriate and humane animal care.

Liberty University IACUC suggests the following numbering system, where every animal (or group of animals) receives a unique number. These numbers:

1. Are easily obtained
2. Increase efficiency and accuracy of census and tracking of animal populations
3. Will help prevent mistakes such as inaccurate transfer of animals, or procedures performed on the wrong animals
4. Meet regulatory requirements for animal identification
5. Provide a mechanism whereby investigators can attach important information to an animal or group of animals

ANIMAL NUMBERING SHALL BE PERFORMED IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER:

PI-Protocol#.Animal#/Cage#→SMITH-1.12

*Laboratory animals housed in a location other than a university-owned vivarium must be approved by the IACUC.

Larger animals must each have their own sticker. Rodents, fish, and other small animals housed in groups can use one sticker for each animal, or can alternatively use one sticker for each cage or housing unit.

Once established, an identification sticker must not be replaced. After labeling an animal or group of animals, the identification sticker shall remain until the animals or cage are decommissioned from the protocol. Change in information, such as PI or protocol number may require a new identification sticker with an updated protocol number in the animal ID.