

POLICY REGARDING SURVIVAL SURGERIES

PURPOSE:

This policy defines the types of surgery used in teaching and research protocols, and describes the criteria by which an animal may undergo multiple survival surgeries.

POLICY:

The classification of a surgery shall be performed on a case-by-case basis by the IACUC, with input from the attending veterinarian with regard to its impact on the well-being of the animal(s) involved. The following definitions serve as a guide to the types of surgery often performed:

- **Survival Surgery:** a surgery from which an animal will regain consciousness following the procedure. Aseptic technique must be used for all survival surgical procedures in all species.
- **Major survival surgery:** a surgical procedure that penetrates and exposes a body cavity or produces substantial impairment of physical or physiological functions (9 CFR, 1&2), or involves extensive tissue dissection or transection (*The Guide*). Examples include, but are not limited to, laparotomy, thoracotomy, ovariectomy, nephrectomy.
- **Minor survival surgery:** a surgical procedure that does not expose a body cavity and causes little or no physical impairment. Examples include, but are not limited to, suturing, percutaneous biopsy, lymph node biopsy, laparoscopic oocyte collection.
- **Multiple survival surgery:** more than one survival surgery (either major or minor) on a single animal.

MULTIPLE SURVIVAL SURGERY CRITERIA

Multiple survival surgery is discouraged, but may be permitted under the following circumstances, if justified and subsequently approved by the IACUC:

- An essential component of a single research project or protocol
- Scientifically justified by the PI: explanation of purpose and procedures, total number of surgeries, frequency of the procedure, period of time between procedures, methods used to minimize pain and distress. References must be provided where available.
- Necessary for the clinical health of the animal(s). Consult with the attending veterinarian if such a procedure is warranted.

LIMITATIONS & CONSIDERATIONS

The following must be considered when performing surgical procedures:

- Individuals performing survival surgery must be knowledgeable about aseptic surgical techniques and have adequate training and skill to conduct the procedure without causing undue post-operative distress to the animal.
- All survival surgical procedures on non-rodent mammalian species must be conducted in surgical facilities designed for that purpose and approved by the IACUC.
 - A dedicated surgical suite is not required for rodents and non-mammalian vertebrates. However, this is the most desirable option and shall be used if available.

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- For USDA-covered animals undergoing multiple survival surgeries in separate, unrelated research protocols, USDA/APHIS approval must be secured. Such approvals must be requested by the IO.
- The IACUC will strictly monitor outcomes to determine whether continuation of multiple-survival surgeries is warranted.
- Some procedures classified as minor may induce significant post-procedural pain, and should be similarly justified if performed multiple times.
- Cost savings is not an acceptable justification for performing multiple survival surgeries.
- The number of survival surgeries must be limited to the minimum number necessary to achieve the research objectives, with consideration given to minimizing pain and distress.