

DREXEL UNIVERSITY ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE POLICY ON PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

OBJECTIVE: To assure appropriate IACUC review of physical restraint of animals and to ensure humane care and use. Restraint is the use of manual, mechanical, or chemical means to limit some or all of an animal's normal movement for such purposes as examination, collection of samples, and drug administration.

RESPONSIBILITY: The Investigator is responsible for ensuring that everyone working on an applicable protocol adheres to this policy.

PROCEDURE: Restricting the mobility of animals for a period exceeding 60 minutes in length is considered physical restraint and must be scientifically justified and receive prior approval from the IACUC as a part of the protocol review process. All procedures including momentary restraint must be described and approved by the IACUC.

The use of restraint devices should be avoided unless it is necessary for achieving research results and or for assuring personnel safety. When used, devices must be suitable in size, design, and operation to minimize discomfort and, whenever possible, they should provide the minimum restraint practical, e.g., by adjusting dog slings so that the animal has the choice of standing or resting and by loosening rabbit restrainers between sample collections. Before the experimental procedure utilizing a restraint device begins, pigs and dogs must be acclimated to the device so that the researcher is assured that the animal will adjust and will be a suitable research subject. Some researchers have reported that rabbits and rats do less well after restrainer training. The IACUC will allow some flexibility regarding acclimatization of these species, but planned restraint must receive approval.

Acclimation to the restraint device should occur over a period of days with progressively longer periods each session. If an animal has been previously acclimated and more than a month has elapsed since the animal has been in a sling or other device, a brief session of five minutes or so should be used to determine that the animal is still acclimated.

Several principles must be adhered to:

Restraint devices should not be considered a normal method of housing, and must be justified in the animal use protocol.

- Restraint devices should not be used simply as a convenience in handling or managing animals.
- Alternatives to physical restraint should be considered.
- The period of restraint should be the minimum required to accomplish the research objectives.

- Animals to be placed in restraint devices should be given training (with positive reinforcement) to adapt to the equipment and personnel.
- Animals that fail to adapt should be removed from the study.
- Provision should be made for observation of the animal at appropriate intervals, as determined by the IACUC.
 - Veterinary care must be provided if lesions or illnesses associated with restraint are observed. The presence of lesions, illness, or severe behavioral change often necessitates the temporary or permanent removal of the animal from restraint.
 - The purpose of the restraint and its duration should be clearly explained to personnel involved with the study.

Approval date: December 2003

Last review date: January 11, 2012