

POLICY: Housing of Rodents

Objective:	To provide guidance on the housing of rodents (Genus <i>Mus</i> and <i>Rattus</i>) in the Vivarium, with a focus on social needs
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I. Scope

This policy describes procedures to provide guidance on the housing of rodents (Genus *Mus* and *Rattus*) in the Vivarium, with a focus on social needs.

II. Background

Per the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* (i.e., *Guide*) (2011, National Research Council):

1. *Mus* and *Rattus* species (and other social rodent species as determined by the Attending Veterinarian) should be social-housed with a goal of maximizing species-specific behaviors and minimizing stress-induced behaviors.
2. Consideration should be given to the animal's social needs. The social environment usually involves physical contact and communication among members of the same species (conspecifics), although it can include noncontact communication among individuals through visual, auditory, and olfactory signals.
3. Individual housing of rodents may be needed for scientific experimentation and must be justified in the IACUC protocol. The duration of single housing should be limited to the time needed to complete the protocol's objectives.
4. The IACUC understands that there are situations where single housing occurs that are not inherently intentional. These exempted situations include:
 - a. separation at weaning due to uneven number of pups
 - b. removal of animals from cage due to experimentation or euthanasia
 - c. uncrating of mice that are shipped with uneven numbers

III. Procedures

1. All caging requirements will follow the *Guide*.
2. All social rodents (*Mus* and *Rattus*, and others as determined by the AV) will be group housed unless specifically exempted as described above.
3. Rodent single housing requires:
 - a. a scientific justification for single housing included in an IACUC-approved protocol,
NOTE: *Scientific justification is approved via submission of the protocol or an amendment to an existing protocol.*

or

approval obtained from the AV authorizing single-housing due to medical concerns (including, but not limited to, aggression/fighting).

b. The cages will be marked as such.

4. Single housing will continue at the discretion of the Attending Veterinarian as medically necessitated. Animals will be monitored by the AV or vivarium staff during medical observation or treatment.
5. All singly housed animals (including pregnant females) will have appropriate enrichment provided, unless a scientific justification is documented in an IACUC-approved protocol, or a medical waiver is provided by the AV.

References

- National Research Council. *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals: Eighth Edition*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2011. Pg 57.

Revision History

Approved September 24, 2012

Re-approved May 18, 2015; April 23, 2018; January 25, 2021

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