

# Acclimation Period for Newly Received Laboratory Animals Guidelines

## I. Introduction:

Transportation and introduction of animals into a vivarium with new housing conditions, changes in social groupings, new feed, and new care staff are potentially stressful events. Animals need a period of time for physiological, psychological, and nutritional stabilization to occur. An acclimation period allows animals time to stabilize in a new environment and promotes both animal welfare and reproducible experimental results.

## II. Definitions:

**Rodents and nonmammalian vertebrates** such as birds, amphibians and reptiles must have a minimum acclimation period of 48 hours before undergoing any survival procedures. For terminal procedures, an acclimation period of 48 hours is recommended but not required. Animals intended for terminal experiments may be used prior to the end of this acclimatization period following consultation with the veterinary staff. A stabilization period of 5-7 days is recommended for smaller animals (rodents and rabbits) and 1-3 weeks for *Xenopus* frogs.

**Non-rodent mammals** must have a minimum acclimation period of 72 hours before undergoing survival procedures. In addition, before undergoing any research procedures, animals must appear healthy, and have normal appetites and other bodily functions. For terminal research procedures, an acclimation period of 72 hours is recommended to ensure the validity of research results. For terminal training procedures, an acclimation period is not required. A stabilization period of 5-7 days is recommended for smaller animals.

## III. Guidelines:

Newly received laboratory animals must be held for a minimum period of time (depending on the species and procedural use) without undergoing any experimental or other manipulation. The length of time for acclimatization will depend on the type and duration of animal transportation, the species involved, and the intended use of the animals.

## IV. References:

- **Conour LA, Murray KA, Brown MJ.** Preparation of animals for research--issues to consider for rodents and rabbits. *ILAR J.* 2006;47(4):283-93.
- **Obernier JA, Baldwin RL.** Establishing an appropriate period of acclimatization following transportation of laboratory animals. *ILAR J.* 2006;47(4):364-9.