

University of California, Merced
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee Policy

Version No. 1

Policy No. 119

Animal Restraint

I. Purpose: This document delineates the responsibilities and obligations of the Principal Investigator and study personnel using animal restraint.

II. Definition:

Restraint: Is the use of manual, mechanical, or chemical means to limit some or all an animal's normal movement for such purposes as examination, collection of samples, and drug administration.

Brief: Is the use of physical restraint for a period of up to 15 minutes.

Prolonged restraint: Is the use of physical restraint for a period greater than 15 minutes.

III. Background

In most research applications, animals are restrained for brief periods. Often animals can be trained, through use of positive reinforcement, to present limbs or remain immobile for brief procedures.

If restraint devices are required, they should be suitable in size, design, and operation to minimize discomfort or injury to the animal. If restraint devices are required for more than brief periods of time, they need to be reviewed by the IACUC and identified in the protocol with a description of the device, and the duration of restraint.

Prolonged restraint should be avoided unless it is essential for achieving research objectives. Approval by the IACUC requires scientific justification, a description of the restraint device, the duration of restraint, monitoring procedures and methods to minimize animal distress (e.g. acclimation to the device).

IV. General Points

- Restraint devices should not be used simply as a convenience in handling or managing animals.
- When restraint devices are used, they should be specifically designed to accomplish research goals that are impossible or impractical to accomplish by other means or to prevent injury to animals or personnel.
- The period of restraint should be the minimum required to accomplish the research objectives.
- If possible, animals placed in restraint devices should be given training to adapt to the equipment and personnel.

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- Provision should be made for observation of the animal at appropriate intervals.
- Veterinary care should be provided if lesions or illnesses associated with restraint are observed. The presence of lesions, illnesses, or severe behavioral change often necessitates temporary or permanent removal of the animal from restraint.

V. References:

1. Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (Eighth Edition)