

University of Notre Dame IACUC Policy on Physical Restraint of Animals

Purpose

Restraint of animals can be a significantly distressful event, and the use of any restraint should be performed judiciously and kept to a minimum. The University of Notre Dame Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee defines prolonged restraint as any restraint, other than that induced by anesthesia, which lasts in excess of 2 hours. This would include maintaining animals in primary enclosures which are smaller than that which is recommended by the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*.

Precautions

1. Prolonged restraint is allowed only if justified for specific scientific reasons. In such cases, investigators should include opportunities for the animal to be relieved of restraint for short periods of time if such opportunities can be accommodated within the parameters and needs of the study.
2. Physical restraint is the use of manual or mechanical means to limit some or all of an animal normal movement for the purpose of examination, collection of samples, drug administration, therapy, or experimental manipulation.
3. Animals may be physically restrained briefly either manually or with restraint devices. The period of restraint must be the minimum time necessary to perform the procedure. Personnel administering the restraint must be properly trained to handle the species of animal and specific method of restraint. Restraint devices should be suitable in size, design, and operation to minimize discomfort or injury to the animal.
4. Prolonged restraint of animals is discouraged and must be specifically justified as essential for accomplishing the research objectives in the Animal Use Protocol and approved by the IACUC.
5. The use of less restrictive systems that do not limit the animals' ability to make normal postural adjustments, such as tether systems, should be used when compatible with the protocol objectives.
6. 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.

Process

1. Restraint devices should not be used simply as a convenience in handling or managing animals.
2. Restraint devices are not to be considered normal methods of housing.
3. The period of restraint should be the minimum required to accomplish the research objectives.
4. Animals to be placed in restraint devices should be acclimated to the equipment and personnel.
5. Provision must be made for observation of the animal at appropriate intervals as determined by the IACUC.
6. If illness or lesions associated with restraint are observed, a Veterinary Log must be generated and submitted. Veterinary care must be provided. The presence of lesions, illness, or severe behavioral change may necessitate the temporary or permanent removal of the animal from prolonged restraint devices.