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| Version: 2.0 Effective Date: 10/1/2018 | FASTING ANIMALS, SPECIAL/REGULATED DIETS/WATER/HOUSING POLICY | Supersedes Document Dated: 8/24/2012 |
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I. Background

The *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* indicates that topics to be considered in the animal use protocol include nonstandard housing and husbandry requirements. Some studies require temporary husbandry procedures that fall outside of standard procedures and are overseen by investigators rather than animal care staff.

II. Policy

This policy ensures the welfare of research animals undergoing nonstandard husbandry procedures (e.g., fasting, feeding/watering, or special housing conditions) when husbandry is provided by investigators.

III. Definitions

- A. Special diets: any diet or water offered ad libitum that replaces the standard OLAC diet or plain water (e.g., high fat diet, tamoxifen water).
- B. Regulated diets: diet or water that deviates from OLAC Standard Operating Procedures in that it is offered in a specified amount or at a particular time of day. If there is any portion of the day where food or water is not available, it is considered regulated.
- C. Fasting: a period of time, usually a one-time period of ≤ 24 -hours, when the animal does not have usual access to food or water.
- D. Special housing conditions: conditions that replace standard housing conditions, such as extended exposure to cold to induce torpor, exposure to nonstandard temperatures for the study of thermoregulation, or housing of animals in metabolic cages.

IV. Responsibilities

- A. Principal Investigator (PI) – The PI is responsible for ensuring that all laboratory personnel who oversee nonstandard husbandry procedures for animals understand and abide by this policy.
- B. Office of Laboratory Animal Care (OLAC) – OLAC personnel are responsible for communicating to the PI any problems with the monitoring or documentation of care (e.g., cage cards or daily log) for animals undergoing nonstandard husbandry procedures and, if deemed necessary for animal welfare, returning animals to standard husbandry conditions.
- C. Animal Care and Use Committee (ACUC) – Nonstandard husbandry procedures for animals must be described and justified in the Animal Use Protocol (AUP) and approved by the ACUC before implementation.

V. Procedures

- A. Each cage of animals that is being fasted or that is provided with special or regulated diets or water must be clearly marked with a yellow “Investigator Will” card (see Appendix 1).
 1. This card must clearly indicate the start and end dates for the diet or water procedure.
 2. An emergency contact phone number and email address must be included on this card.
 3. Cards for this purpose can be obtained from OLAC by completing the Request for Special Services form on the OLAC website. A description of the acceptable amount of food/water (e.g., food hopper may only contain several pieces of food or might be empty at times) should be included with the request.
- B. If special procedures are complex and/or entail more than simple dietary changes, a daily check list, as outlined in the PI's AUP, must be maintained and posted in the animal housing area. Please refer to ACUC Guidelines on [Investigator Care of Vertebrate Animals](#) for additional information.
- C. When returning care to OLAC, the PI must do all of the following:
 1. Supply all cages with standard diet and/or water.
 2. Remove “Investigator Will” cards from all cages and maintain with lab records.
 3. Communicate the return to OLAC care to the facility supervisor via email.
- D. Special diets/water: due to the fragile nature of many special diets, the level of food available to each animal must be checked a minimum of three times a week. All animals should be checked by responsible laboratory personnel at the end of the week to ensure that enough diet/water is present for weekends and/or extended holiday periods.
 1. This monitoring must be documented by recording the date of each check and the initials of the responsible individual on the back of the “Investigator Will” card.
 2. Stored special diets or supplements must be covered and clearly labeled, noting contents, responsible investigator, and expiration date. These items must be stored within OLAC-maintained food storage or ACUC-approved storage space.
- E. Regulated diets/water: animals that are on regulated diets/water or in special housing conditions must be checked daily, including weekends. For days on which food/water is available *ad libitum*, this should be indicated on the “Investigator Will” card (i.e., there should be no blank spaces on the back of the card for regulated food/water).
- F. Regulated diets/water: if animals are found without food or water and the cage card or log for those animals has not been initialed during the past 24 hours, OLAC will make every reasonable effort to contact the responsible parties listed on

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the cage card or log. However, if a contact number is not listed, or if arrangements to feed/water the animals have not been made by 3 PM of the same day, OLAC will feed/water the animals. In this case, the animals will be fed standard diet appropriate for the species involved.

VI. References

- A. Institute of Laboratory Animal Research (ILAR). National Research Council (2011). *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* (8th edition). Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press.
- B. ACUC Guideline on [Investigator Care of Vertebrate Animals](#)

APPENDIX 1: “Investigator Will” Cage Card

FRONT:

Investigator Will

Feed (Additive: _____)

Water (Additive: _____)

Fast

Change Cage (OLAC Frequency)

Time Period:
Cage #: _____ Start: _____ End: _____

Responsible Person Phone: _____

Alternate Phone & Email: _____

Note: OLAC will contact the designated individual if animals are found without food or water and the log has not been checked in 24 hours. If there is no response by the end of the working day, OLAC will provide the animals with standard rodent diet and/or water.

BACK:

Cage Checked and Changed

Date & Initials

All animals on regulated diets and/or receiving special water must be initialed **every 24 hours** including weekends and holidays. All animals on special diets must be checked **at least three times per week**.

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