Georgia State University
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)

It is the responsibility of the Georgia State University (GSU) Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) to ensure judicious and humane use of animals used in its teaching and research programs that is consistent with federal requirements.*

Policy on Capture of Escaped Rodents

Capture of Escaped Rodents

This policy is designed to minimize the potential for spread of disease/pathogen exposure to the research colony as well as personnel from escaped rodents. The policy provides instruction on how to capture an escaped rodent as well as information about the appropriate personnel to contact in the case of a rodent escape.

Training Requirements

All DAR staff and research staff handling rodents are required to be trained on this policy. Training will be provided through the Division of Animal Resources (DAR).

Prelude

Precautions should be taken to prevent/minimize the occurrence of an escaped rodent. When opening a rodent cage, always be sure to replace the cage top if more than one rodent is in the cage so as to prevent the opportunity for the remaining rodent to escape. Always be aware of the number of rodents in the cage prior to the cage being opened and verify this number when one is finished with the cage. This policy will be posted on the inside of each animal room containing rodents and training on this policy will occur during the conduct of the animal facility orientation process.

Procedure to Capture an Escaped Rodent

1. Any rodent that escapes from its cage or work area and is found running loose within a room/hallway is considered an escaped rodent.
2. During initial escape, try to capture and isolate the rodent by the following methods:
   a. Catch the rodent by hand: *Personnel working in ABSL-2 or ABSL-3 biocontainment areas must wear Kevlar gloves in addition to the normally prescribed PPE in these areas when hand catching rodents to minimize the risk of personnel exposure via a bite or scratch. The DAR will provide Kevlar gloves in the ABSL2 and ABSL3 suites for this purpose.
   b. Cup cover method: Use a cup or a similar object to cover and isolate the rodent. One can then slide a paper or similar object under the cup to form a “lid” and thus contain the rodent for placement into a rodent cage.
c. Traps: If unsuccessful with hand capture or the cup method, humane traps or snap traps can be placed by DAR management to capture the escaped rodent.

3. If capture is successful, place the animal in a clean/lidded rodent cage by itself. Place a cage card on the cage and label the card as “Animal Escaped” and date of the escape. If known label the cage with the PI and protocol number.

4. Always notify DAR management of the escaped rodent even if the rodent is captured.

5. If the rodent is found without prior report of an escape, the DAR management team will communicate with the appropriate Principal Investigators (PIs) and research staff to try to identify the rodent through the use of ear markings, coat color, location in which the rodent was found/seen, and/or the absence of a rodent from a given animal cage.

6. Upon being notified of an escaped rodent or otherwise finding an escaped rodent, a member of the DAR management team will notify the Biological Safety Officer and the IACUC office of the escaped rodent.

7. If the animal is able to be associated with a particular Principal Investigator (PI), the veterinarian will discuss the final disposition of the captured rodent with the PI or associated research staff.

8. If the animal is unable to be associated with a particular PI, the veterinarian will determine the final disposition of the captured rodent. Particularly if it is not possible to associate the escaped rodent with a particular PI, the final disposition is typically euthanasia of the rodent at which time tissues may be collected (serum and formalin-fixed tissues). These samples will be held until a decision is made by the veterinarian, the Biological Safety Officer, and the IACUC Chair that it is either ok to discard these tissues or that the tissues are to be submitted for testing.

Regarding animals housed in the ABSL-3 biocontainment area, the DAR staff conducts a “head count” of the rodents contained in this area on a daily basis. Further, the researchers working in this area are required to document all subtractions (via a spontaneous death or euthanasia). Accordingly, the DAR management team is able to readily ascertain if an animal is missing from this area.

**Pertinent Regulations**

*U.S. Government Principles for the Utilization and Care of Vertebrate Animals Used in Testing, Research, and Training*

*Public Health Service Policy*

*Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*

*Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and AWA Regulations*

**IACUC Approval Date:**

**Signature IACUC Chair:**

**Revision Dates:**