



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

May 14, 2014

TO: Addressees

FROM: Deputy Director for Intramural Research, NIH

SUBJECT: Timely Assessment and Resolution of Animal Issues Involving Potential Pain and Distress

This memorandum is an update of a similar memorandum dated May 26, 2005. The NIH intramural research program remains committed to research animal welfare. Research animals housed in NIH facilities must be monitored daily for potential pain and distress. A timely, appropriate response is required when observations by principal investigators, veterinarians, animal care technicians or others, raise concern about the existence of potential pain and distress. Emergency or acute conditions call for a veterinary response on the same day, although other issues, e.g., overcrowding, etc., may be appropriately handled within 24 hours. Sound judgment by those trained in the health and well-being of research animals is essential in making appropriate decisions regarding the need to notify the veterinarian. The veterinarian is responsible for discussing observations with the principal investigator or their designee to clarify the animal's condition and the need for intervention. To this end, clear, timely communications among all those involved in animal care and use are essential.

To formalize that process, the attached (Attachment 1) "Instructions for Animal Treatment and Care" form was incorporated as a component of the NIH Animal Study Proposal template (ASP) ([IO Animal Study Proposal Template Policy Memo](#)). The form serves to provide primary and alternate points of contact for both during and after work hours, to include weekends and holidays, and specifies what restrictions, if any, may affect veterinary treatment of animals covered by each ASP, and any research criteria which may affect the method of euthanasia, if that decision is made by the veterinarian.

At Attachment 2 is a copy of the current ARAC [Guidelines for ACUC Oversight of Animal Activities in Shared and Central Facilities](#). I continue to expect all NIH IRP Animal Care and Use program participants to read and comply with that document, which by virtue of this memorandum, is considered NIH IRP policy.

Please contact me, or the Director, Office of Animal Care and Use at 301-496-5424 if additional information or clarifications are required.

Michael M. Gottesman, M.D.

Attachments

Addressees:

IC Directors
Scientific Directors
IC ACUC Members
Animal Program Directors
IC Facility and Clinical Veterinarians
Animal Facility Managers
NIH IRP Principal Investigators and Animal Users