

Housing of Male Mice Guidelines

Background:

With the increased research use of genetically modified animals and the increased need for investigators to oversee their own breeding colonies of mice, this policy is intended to provide guidelines to the investigators and their staff on when and how it is appropriate to house male mice together. The intent of these guidelines is to minimize the potential for fighting amongst male mice that may lead to wounding and discomfort of the animals.

Mice are social animals and whenever possible should be housed in compatible groups. However, male mice can be aggressive and display territorial signs when housed with other male mice. Different strains of mice display more aggression than others and aggression can occur between sexes of mice and amongst females albeit not as common. Listed below are steps that should be followed to decrease the incidence of fighting in male mice.

Guidelines for the Housing of Male Mice

- Mice should be weaned at the appropriate age (21 days unless approved in the protocol) and separated according to sex. Minimal, if any, mixing of litters should be done at this time.
- Male mice from different litters that have not been housed together since weaning should **NOT** be housed together.
- There is strain variability of male aggression. Males of some strains, even if they have been housed together since weaning, may need to be separated after getting older, especially when housed in the same room with breeding females.
- Male mice that have previously been breeders should **NEVER** be housed together and should be housed singly.
- Any mice that are found to have been fighting should **IMMEDIATELY** be housed in separate cages. Most importantly, once fighting is noticed the aggressor mouse should **ALWAYS** be housed separately.