

SOP: **HU-08**

Title: **Husbandry Procedures for the Rabbit**

SOP Last Revision Date:
12MAY09

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to describe the husbandry procedures for the rabbit. This SOP applies to rabbits housed at the Laboratory Animal Research Core's animal facilities on the campus of the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

POLICY

It is LARC policy to meet or exceed all federal, state, local regulations and institutional policies/procedures as they apply to the use of animals in research. Personnel must attend any applicable training in animal care and use, occupational health and safety, equipment operation, and Standard Operating Procedures prior to performing activities outlined in this SOP or work under the direct supervision of a trained LARC staff member.

REFERENCES

- A. Laboratory Animal Research Core Personnel
- B. *The Guide for Care and Use of Laboratory Animals "The Guide"*
- C. Office Of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW)
- D. Animal Welfare Act and Animal Welfare Regulations (AWA & AWR's)
- E. *SA-01 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)*
- F. *HU-09 Finding Sick or Dead Animals*

PROCEDURES

A. Observations

- a. Technicians are to don the appropriate PPE stated in *SA-01 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)*.
- b. Each morning the Animal Technician is to observe all rabbits and their cage pans for signs of illness, injury or death.
- c. Clinical signs observed may include: alopecia, diarrhea, ptyalism, anorexia, weight loss, nasal discharge, ocular discharge, head tilt and/or shaking of the head, and changes in behavior or mannerisms.
- d. If a health problem is detected or a rabbit is found dead, follow procedures stated in *HU-09 Finding Sick or Dead Animals* and notify LARC management and LARC Veterinarian Technician immediately.
- e. LARC Veterinarian is to be notified immediately by LARC management or LARC Veterinarian Technician.

B. Identification

- a. All rabbits are to be individually identified. This is usually done by purchasing vendor. If not, rabbits are identified at the advisement of the LARC Veterinarian.

C. Husbandry Daily

- a. Rabbits are fed Purina Rabbit Chow 5326 unless specified.
- b. Feed barrels are to be labeled with feed type, milling date and expiration date.
- c. Check feeders daily. Feeders are to be filled to half capacity all times.
- d. Rabbits are to have free access to clean potable water at all times. If bottle is less than $\frac{1}{2}$ full, it is to be filled with tap water or replaced with a clean full water bottle.

D. Husbandry Weekly

- a. Pull and replace cage pans once weekly or more often if pan liner becomes urine soaked, has an excess of hair accumulation, feces, etc.
- b. All rabbits are to receive new timothy cubes, bunny blocks, alfalfa and or other forms of treats every Monday.

E. Husbandry Bi-Weekly

- a. A complete cage change is performed bi-weekly (rack, feeders, enrichment devices, water bottles).
- b. Transfer rabbits to clean cages along with their individual cage card.
- c. Enrichment devices are to be exchanged, so that each rabbit is given a different device from the week previous. Enrichment devices are to be checked routinely for sharp edges, burrs, cracks in the plastic, etc. Discard any items that may be a potential safety hazard to the animal.
- d. All dirty equipment is taken directly to the dirty side of cage wash for sanitizing. Do not leave soiled caging in corridors.

F. Sanitation

- a. Each room is to be swept and moped every day except for weekends & holidays.
- b. Each room is to be completely sanitized once weekly.
- c. All carts or materials are to be wiped down daily for debris or hair accumulation.
- d. Trash is to be removed from the room daily and taken to the dumpster.
- e. Feed barrels and trash barrels are to be sanitized monthly and documented.

G. Documentation

- a. All husbandry documentation is to be recorded on the Animal Room Maintenance Record.