

**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**  
**DIVISION OF COMPARATIVE MEDICINE**  
**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA**

SOP#: 017.3

Date Issued: 2/01

Date Revised: 7/13

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**TITLE:** Handling of Animals Found Moribund or Dead  
**SCOPE:** All Authorized Personnel  
**RESPONSIBILITY:** Facility Manager and All Animal Care Staff  
**PURPOSE:** To Outline the Proper Procedures for Handling Moribund/Dead Animals

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**I. PURPOSE**

1. To outline the proper procedure to follow when an animal is found moribund (i.e., near death) or dead during a study.

**II. RESPONSIBILITY**

1. All program staff contributes to the oversight and reporting of animal health status.

**III. PROCEDURES**

1. A **Contact Sheet** is placed in each **Room Log Book** that identifies an individual(s) of the research staff to be contacted in the event of an emergency, their phone or pager #, and specific instructions for animals found moribund or dead for each IACUC protocol.
2. Animal health surveillance is conducted in accordance with **SOP #006** entitled, **Animal Health and Environmental Surveillance**.
3. If a moribund animal is observed (i.e., in the process of dying), animal care staff review the **Contact Sheet** for any specific instructions from the research staff, and in addition to these instructions, report the animal's condition as described in **SOP #006**.

**NOTE: If at any time there is a medical emergency, the attending clinical veterinarian or designee is to be notified immediately.**

4. Staff should immediately report all medical emergencies verbally directly to the Facility Manager or their designee and to the PI or their designee, or if a Facility Manager is not available, to the Clinical Veterinarian or their designee.
5. When an animal is found moribund, the Facility Manager or their designee must notify the attending research staff immediately of the animal's condition, and request that the research staff assess the animal's condition immediately to resolve the problem, and if necessary contact the Clinical Veterinarian to ensure prompt resolution of the animal's condition. The manager records that this communication

- took place in the Acknowledgment column on the **Health and Environmental Concern Form** by recording the name and phone number of the person contacted.
6. When an animal is found dead the animal care staff:
    - a. Record found dead (FD) on the animal's cage card.
    - b. Review the **Contact Sheet** for any specific instructions from the research staff regarding animals FD, e.g., request notification, specific procedures for handling carcasses, and/or GLP requirements.
    - c. When a PI has requested to be notified, follow their instructions and record the IACUC #, and animal # or cage # of that animal on the Facility Manager's **Animal Health and Environmental Concerns Form**.
    - d. If there are no specific instructions, place the carcass in a plastic bag, place the bag in the freezer designated for animal carcasses.
    - e. For USDA regulated species, record FD in the animal's medical record and notify the Facility Manager.
    - f. Daily, record the number of animals found dead on the **Per Diem Sheet** for the corresponding IACUC protocol.
  7. When animals are found dead and the P.I. has communicated that notification of animal deaths is necessary, the Facility Manager, or designee, contacts the attending research staff and records the name and phone # of the individual contacted on the **Health and Environmental Concerns Form** in the Acknowledgement column.
  8. If the animal is part of a study protocol being conducted in accordance with **21 CFR Part 58 Good Laboratory Practices for Nonclinical Laboratory Studies** and there are specific instructions or procedures for animals found moribund or dead, these instructions must be in writing on the **Contact Sheet** in the **Room Log Book**.
  9. The appropriate personnel are notified promptly when an unanticipated animal death occurs, which necessitates immediate necropsy.
  10. If the last animal in the cage is found dead, remove the cage to dirty cagewash, and if requested, provide the cage card to research staff.
  11. Deduct the number of animals/boxes from the **Per Diem Sheet** when applicable.
  12. Concerns regarding the number of unanticipated animal deaths associated with a particular research protocol and/or with a specific genotype of research animal should be addressed to the Clinical Veterinarians in writing. Clinical Veterinarians evaluate the alleged concerns of an excessive mortality, and take an appropriate course of action to resolve the concern.

Approved:

Date: