

SOP #: 116.01

Title: SOP - Social Housing & Enrichment
Approvals:
Attending Veterinarian _____
IACUC Chair [Signature]

Date: 10/24/2019
Date: 10.24.19

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to describe requirements for the social housing of social animals and to recognize certain circumstances require an exception to this policy and will be justified and approved by the IACUC.

2. Responsibility

- 2.1 The steps outlined in this policy are for animal users.

3. Definitions

4. Social Housing

- 4.1 The *Guide*¹ states that single housing of social species should be the exception. Social housing will be considered by the IACUC as the default method of housing unless otherwise justified based on social incompatibility resulting from inappropriate behavior, veterinary concerns regarding animal well-being, or scientific necessity approved by the IACUC. Social species maintained at FIU include all mice, rats, fish, quail and pigs. When necessary, single housing of social animals should be limited to the minimum period necessary. Common exceptions to social housing are:

- 4.1.1 Any animal that has demonstrated aggression/fighting behavior or animals known to have a propensity for fighting (e.g., male mice, male rabbits, female hamsters).
- 4.1.2 Breeders not currently in use.
- 4.1.3 When a companion animal is not available (e.g., a single animal of a particular sex at weaning, or the last animal remaining in an experimental cohort).

- 4.1.4 Animals in the immediate post-surgical period (i.e., when sutures are present); however, animals must be returned to social housing after suture removal.
- 4.1.5 Scientific necessity as reviewed and approved by the IACUC.
- 4.1.6 Veterinary concerns regarding the well-being of the animal or if the animal is under veterinary treatment or observations (i.e., long-term health concerns, animals will be kept apart if social housing will cause injury).

5. Environmental Enrichment

- 5.1 To provide for the physical and social needs of research animals, the IACUC requires that appropriate environmental enrichment be provided as part of standard animal housing unless there is scientific justification, approved by the IACUC that precludes the use of environmental enrichment materials or practices.
- 5.2 This policy outlines the types of standard housing used for laboratory animal species at FIU and the types of environmental enrichment materials or practices that may be used to enhance species-specific behavior and reduce distress and anxiety in laboratory animals.
- 5.3 Implementation –
 - The goal is to provide an optimum environment for the animals. The IACUC will continue to periodically modify this plan in response to the evolving best practices.
 - 5.3.1 All animals housed for use in research, teaching or testing purposes at FIU must be housed in an animal facility or other space approved by the IACUC.
 - 5.3.2 Each animal housing room (or isolated housing unit) will contain a single species unless special housing arrangements have been made with the Office of Laboratory Animal Research (OLAR) for compatible species.
 - 5.3.3 Standard housing is provided by OLAR on a recharge basis, unless the IACUC has approved that housing can be provided and maintained by research groups.
 - 5.3.4 Changes to the standard housing and environmental enrichment described in Table 1 below are not permitted except under the following circumstances:
 - 5.3.4.1 Changes are described and justified (based on experimental requirements) in the animal use protocol and approved by the IACUC.
 - 5.3.4.2 Changes are prescribed by the OLAR group for animal health or welfare reasons.

- 5.3.4.3 Enrichment materials or practices should not significantly alter the species-appropriate standards for husbandry, nutrient requirements or housing, as described in The Guide, unless these deviations are described and approved by the IACUC in the animal use protocol.
- 5.3.4.4 Provision of environmental enrichment other than the Standard or Allowed Environmental Enrichment described in Table below must be described in the IACUC protocol. If the standard housing and enrichment for the species cannot be used, a justification must be submitted and approved by the IACUC.
- 5.3.4.5 For USDA-covered species, a written record of the environmental enrichment items provided will be kept along with the daily husbandry records.
- 5.3.4.6 Under certain conditions, animals in behavioral studies receive supplemental enrichments due to handling and testing.

5.4 Table of Standard and Additional Enrichment

Species (common name)	Standard Housing	Standard Environmental Enrichment Required	Additional Enrichment Allowed/Recommended (Research Group Must Provide)
Mice	Solid-bottom plastic cage with a wire bar lid that serves as a food hopper and water bottle holder. Filter top (microisolator lid). Cages may be placed on ventilated racks providing filtered air directly to the cage, or placed on static racks. Water bottle. Contact bedding consisting of commercially-available corn cob particles, wood chips, cotton, or paper products specifically made for laboratory animals. Commercially-available laboratory rodent diets approved by OLAR.	Group-housed if compatible (e.g. adult males from different litters cannot be housed together). Nesting material made from paper or cotton fibers. (e.g. Nestlets). For Lab Products® cages without a wire bar, provide a plastic loft or mouse hut	Disposable cardboard mouse houses ("Shepherd Shacks") Plastic mouse houses (must be cage-washer safe).
Rats	Solid-bottom plastic cage with a wire bar lid that serves as a food hopper and water bottle holder. Filter top (microisolator lid) may be used. Cages may be placed on ventilated racks providing	Group-housed if compatible. Nesting material Plastic rat "houses" or tubes	Sterilized wooden tongue depressors for chewing. Sterilized Nyla bones for chewing.

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