



Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee Guidelines and Policies

Approved 11/15/06

POLICY ON OVERCROWDING OF MOUSE CAGES

The housing of mice must not exceed a density greater than recommended by the NRC "Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals", unless approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee.

- Overcrowding is defined as more than 5 adult mice (mice over 21 days of age) per cage (8" x 11" size).
- For paired breeding conditions, a breeding pair with a litter per cage is the maximum allowed.
- Under harem breeding conditions, a mouse cage containing more than one pregnant mouse with a visibly extended abdomen is considered overcrowded. This is necessary to prevent two litters in one mouse cage.
- Cages with more than one litter are considered overcrowded.

When cages are observed as overcrowded, they will be marked with an "Overcrowded Cage" card that is dated, and the BRF office will be notified. The PI or designate will receive notification by email or voice to rectify the overcrowding. After the overcrowding has been corrected by the PI or his/her designate, the overcrowded cage card must be signed, dated, and returned to the BRF office. Removal of an overcrowded cage card without correcting the overcrowding is not permitted and will be reported to the IACUC if discovered.

If the overcrowding is not corrected within 24 hours of the cage being marked as 'overcrowded', BRF staff will separate the mice, adjust the census, duplicate the cage card, and identify the new cage with a card indicating the date that the overcrowding was corrected. Should an investigator fail to rectify overcrowding in a timely manner, the BRF assumes no liability whatsoever in the maintenance of research data from the affected cage/cages. While every effort will be made by the BRF staff to duplicate and identify separated animals correctly, their only mission in this instance is to ensure that full compliance with federal mandates is maintained.

There will be a \$25.00 service charge per incident. If there are more than three overcrowded cages at one time, there will be an additional charge of \$5 per cage. If an Investigator has more than 3 incidents in a 30-day period, the BRF manager will report this to the IACUC for corrective action. Continuing or repeated non-compliance may result in the IACUC restricting or removing an investigator's privilege to manage a breeding colony.