

**University of Kansas-Lawrence
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee**

Mouse Cage Density Policy

Purpose: In accordance with the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (Guide)*, animals must be provided sufficient cage space to express natural postures without touching enclosure walls or ceiling, be able to turn around, and rest comfortably away from soiled areas. This policy describes standards and procedures employed the Animal Care Unit on behalf of the KU-Lawrence IACUC to ensure compliance with *Guide* rodent housing recommendations.

Applicability: This policy applies to all investigators housing mice in Animal Care Unit (ACU) maintained space unless specific exemption is requested and approved by the IACUC.

Policy:

A. Maximum per cage housing densities for standard (75 in²) microisolators

- a. Five adult mice
- b. Single breeding pair
 - i. Offspring density is unrestricted **provided** pups are less than 21 days old **or** less than 10 g body weight each
 - ii. Birth of a second litter requires immediate removal of oldest litter; this provision is intended to prevent injury of neonates
- c. Breeding trio including 1 adult male and 2 adult females
 - i. Single or multiple litters are permitted
 - ii. Offspring density is unrestricted **provided** all pups are less than 14 days old
 - iii. When one or more pups reaches 14 days old, immediate removal of the oldest litter is required; this provision is intended to prevent injury of neonates
- d. Breeding schemes other than those described above
 - i. All pregnant females **must** be moved to a separate cage prior to parturition
 - ii. No offspring may be born in the adult only cage

B. Maximum per cage housing densities for large (144 in²) microisolators

- a. Ten adult mice
- b. Three adult mice; maximum 17 offspring provided all pups are less than 21 days old **or** less than 10 g body weight each

Compliance:

- A. Principal investigators are responsible for adherence to maximum cage density standards and breeding colony management, including prompt weaning of offspring
- B. ACU personnel will monitor cage density as part of routine husbandry duties. Animal science workers will flag overcrowded cages with an “overcrowded cage card” and the responsible ACU supervisor will notify the principal investigator or designee in writing. Once notified, the investigator will be given 48 working hours to correct cage overcrowding.

- C. In the event cage overcrowding is not corrected within 48 working hours, the animal science worker will separate animals to comply with the aforementioned policy and generate new cage cards with the following information: principal investigator name, AUS number, number of mice, sex, and parent cage identification. The principal investigator will be charged a \$16.00 technical service fee for **each** new cage set up by ACU personnel. The ACU or ACU personnel will not be responsible for errors in separated cages.

- D. In the event a principal investigator fails to correct overcrowded cages three times in a three month period, the ACU Director and University Attending Veterinarian will notify the IACUC.

Animal Welfare: The University Attending Veterinarian is given authority to direct immediate cage change or separation when animal welfare concerns exist.

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