

AUBURN UNIVERSITY

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)

Policy on Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is the use of manual or mechanical means to limit some or all of an animal's normal movement for the purpose of examination, collection of samples, drug administration, therapy, or experimental manipulation. Animals are restrained for brief periods, usually minutes, in most research applications.

Animals can be physically restrained briefly either manually or with restraint devices. Restraint devices should be suitable in size, design, and operation to minimize discomfort or injury to the animal. Many dogs and other animals can be trained, through use of positive reinforcement, to present limbs or remain immobile for brief procedures.

Prolonged restraint should be avoided unless it is essential for achieving research objectives and is approved by the IACUC. Less-restrictive systems that do not limit an animal's ability to make normal postural adjustments, such as stanchions for farm animals, should be used when compatible with protocol objectives. When restraint devices are used, they should be specifically designed to accomplish research goals that are impossible or impractical to accomplish by other means or to prevent injury to animals or personnel.

The following are important guidelines for restraint:

- Restraint devices are not to be considered normal methods of housing.
- Restraint devices should not be used simply as a convenience in handling or managing animals.
- The period of restraint should be the minimum required to accomplish the research objectives.
- Animals to be placed in restraint devices should be given training to adapt to the equipment and personnel.
- Provision should be made for observation of the animal at appropriate intervals, as determined by the IACUC.
- Veterinary care should be provided if lesions or illnesses associated with restraint are observed. The presence of lesions, illness, or severe behavioral change may necessitate temporary or permanent removal of the animal from restraint.

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