



McGill University

Policy on permission to use animals in laboratories outside of the animal facility

Procedures on animals will be conducted within animal facilities. Work with animals outside the animal facility is an exception that requires prior approval by the Facility Animal Care Committee (FACC). This policy describes the rules concerning permission to work with animals in laboratories outside of the animal facility.

I. Description and rationale for the policy

Removal of animals to a laboratory or other setting outside of the animal facility requires adequate justification. This policy provides a framework for FACCs in the approval of work with animals in laboratories outside of the animal facility, taking into account the specific constraints of the facility (space, equipment, etc.). The reasons for this policy are the following:

- 1) *Sanitary issues.* The animal facility must be kept pathogen-free, and to this end, limiting movement of animals, and especially to and from the laboratories is needed.
- 2) *Stress of transportation and relocation.* Moving animals through corridors and elevators, and sitting for a certain amount of time in an unknown environment, with different noise, smell, temperature, etc., is stressful for them. Anxiety and stress should be minimized before euthanasia or in the course of any procedure.
- 3) *Allergens in the air of laboratories.* Rodents are highly allergenic. By conducting procedures outside the facility, more people have the potential to be exposed to allergens, some of whom might not suspect they are at risk of exposure (administrative staff, custodial, visitors, etc.). The ventilation system in the animal facility is designed to be non-re-circulating. This might not be the case in the laboratories, meaning that other people might be exposed through the ventilation system. Prevention of allergies is both an animal care and health and safety issue.
- 4) *Monitoring of procedures.* When procedures are conducted in the animal facility, the technical staff is available to assist users and can help ensure that procedures are done properly. When procedures are conducted outside the facility, the FACC has to make sure that they are done correctly and this makes monitoring more difficult.

II. Procedure to apply for an exemption and be allowed to take animals outside of the animal facility

The following points need to be followed in order to be allowed to perform procedures on animals outside the facility:

- A written request must be made to the FACC. This request must be within the Animal Use Protocol (AUP) (either at the initial application or in an annual renewal) or by amendment if during the period of AUP validity. All applications must include a detailed justification in the application for permission to work with animals outside of the facility. Specifically, the application must address the four concerns raised by such work (see criteria for exemption, below), and indicate the name of the person(s) who will perform these procedures. The request must have been approved by the FACC before the work can start.
- The FACC or an FACC subcommittee shall perform a pre-inspection of the areas and procedures performed outside the animal facility to ensure adequate monitoring, correct handling, adequate environmental parameters and compliance. Animal Health, Veterinary and Quality Assistance staff may also request visits to these areas and to monitor the procedures conducted within at any time thereafter.

- In general, the guidelines for the use of animals outside the facility are the same as those for the use of animals within the animal facility and must be followed at all times.
- The exemption is valid only for the approved procedure(s) and only for the person(s) who will perform the procedure(s).
- On approval of the request within the Animal Use Protocol, an A.L.P.H.A.(Alternate Laboratory Animal Procedure/Housing/Holding Area) certificate will be issued by the FACC. The certificate must be posted within the housing/procedure area. For details, see <http://www.mcgill.ca/research/researchers/compliance/animal/alpha>.

III. Criteria for exemptions

FACCs will use the following criteria to evaluate applications for the right to work with animals outside of the animal facility:

- There needs to be clear and convincing reason(s) that make successful completion of the work in the animal facility impossible. This may include the use of specialized equipment which cannot be housed in the animal facility as well as other species-, experimental- and facility-specific constraints that preclude work in the animal facility.
- The application must demonstrate how all four concerns raised by the work with animals outside of the animal facility (detailed in Section I, above) will be met:
 - 1) Sanitary issues: Measures must be species specific. For example, the use of cover lids and linen to cover cages while in transit and while in the laboratory is mandatory; the transport caging style and size must be appropriate and the density of housing usual in the animal facility must be respected; the chances of animal escape must be minimized during transport and while in the laboratory. Animal and caging waste must be disposed of according to local requirements.
 - 2) Stress of transportation and relocation: The SOP 501"Animal transport and use outside of animal facilities" must be used. For example, the application must include species-specific mechanisms of transport, demonstrate that the transport will use shortest distance possible with reduced exposure to public spaces and indicate that animals will spend a minimum period of time in labs or corridors.
 - 3) Reduction of allergens exposure in the laboratory: As much as possible there must be mechanisms to minimize contact of non-animal users with dead or live animals. For example, it is expected that a dedicated lab area/room (where possible) will be used; that room doors and interior window shades will be closed in the laboratory to avoid inadvertent entrance of non-authorized personnel, reduce exposure to allergens and to reduce animal stress; that countertops and equipment also used for non-animal work be cleaned thoroughly between animals and at the end of the day; that animal handling equipment must be cleaned after use and before storage; that cages must be promptly returned to the animal facility for processing and that dead animals must be bagged and transported to the appropriate place for disposal promptly.
 - 4) Monitoring of procedures: For each procedure performed outside of the animal facility, the FACC or an FACC subcommittee shall ensure that adequate pre-inspection and monitoring takes place to ensure compliance and correct handling; Animal Health, Veterinary and Quality Assistance staff can also ask to monitor the procedures at any time thereafter.