Policy on Photography/Filming of Animals for Research Purposes

1. Purpose
This Policy describes the procedures for photography/filming of animals in a procedure, housing or laboratory setting. It concerns photography/filming by any method, and in the following statements, “photography” includes photography and filming. Although it is not necessary to include photography as a procedure in the Animal Use Protocol, only animals and procedures outlined in the Animal Use Protocol may be photographed.

The widespread use of mobile devices equipped with photographic capabilities permits almost anyone with access to McGill’s animal care areas to both legitimately and illegitimately capture and store images of animal subjects. This policy specifies the conditions under which legitimate photography of animal subjects is permitted within animal research areas located on McGill and/or its Affiliated-Hospital Research Institutes’ property.

This Policy also aims to ensure that ethical standards are maintained and the risk of unwanted exposure for the people and animals in the procedure or housing room is minimized.

This Policy is for research and teaching purposes such as journal publications, data analysis and conference presentations as well as part of the documentation of research findings.

Violation of this Policy may result in disciplinary action by the appropriate administrative offices.

Disclaimer: This Policy does not describe Guidelines and Policies related to photography for public relations purposes or any other public activity. For photography intended for publication in any medium with a non-scientific purpose, the individual must seek written pre-approval from their institutional Media Relations Office.

2. Responsibility
2.1. Principal investigator:
2.1.1. Research staff must be aware of and follow the Policy for photography as outlined below.
2.1.2. The photographs must be stored in a manner that is secure from random access.
2.1.3. Posting any images, audio recordings, or videos of research animals to any social media outlet is strictly prohibited, unless specifically authorized by the appropriate office or committee in the institution/institute in advance. Furthermore, photography of research animals for entertainment purposes and/or for a malicious use is strictly prohibited.

3. General Concerns:
3.1. Unless unavoidable because of the objectives of the experiment, all animals should be photographed in procedure rooms or laboratory settings. If photography needs to take place in an animal housing room, the investigator must ensure that this activity will not affect other research projects in the room. All photography requires pre-approval from the management of the animal facility.
3.2. Photography outside the housing cage is preferred.

3.3. If photography in a housing cage is necessary for completion of the objectives of the experiment, the cage lid should be removed, if possible, prior to photography.

3.4. No cage cards or other identifiers of the relevant institution/institute are to be included in the photograph. Staff should not be identifiable.

3.5. For photographs and videos that will be public, the researcher and staff are required to ensure that all animal-related Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and best practices are followed.

3.6. Agencies, governmental and other outside organizations can request to photograph or film and must obtain written approval by the appropriate office or committee in the institution/institute before any filming can occur.

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