



SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY CARBONDALE

Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee

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| IACUC Policy #: | 510 |
| Policy Title: | <i>Housing of Social Species</i> |
| Date Approved: | December 19, 2018 |
| Date Reviewed: | June 26, 2024 |
| Who must know: | All Principal Investigators, researchers, and personnel who participate in research, teaching, and/or testing involving live vertebrate animals |

Purpose:

The *Guide to the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (The Guide)* states that members of a social species should be socially housed whenever possible. The purpose of this policy is to define what constitutes an acceptable justification for single housing of social species.

Definitions:

Researchers: in addition to principal investigators and other personnel, the term researcher also includes volunteers and/or students approved to complete research in the designated protocol.

Policy:

Social housing is the default method of housing. The following are acceptable exceptions to single housing of social species:

1. Scientific necessity approved by the IACUC
2. Observed social incompatibility (e.g., fighting, food guarding, etc.)
3. Immediate post-operative recovery
4. Veterinary concerns regarding the well-being of the animal
5. Only one animal of a sex or genotype is produced in a litter and no other appropriate weanlings are available for group housing
6. Attrition of cage mates
7. Standard agricultural husbandry practices

During single housing, where possible, visual, auditory, olfactory and, depending on the species, protected tactile contact with compatible animals should be provided.

Procedures:

Animal Use Protocols (AUPs) involving social species must include a description of all applicable exceptions to social housing.

Scientific necessity for single housing is approved by the IACUC on a case-by-case basis and requires clear justification in the AUP. Single housing should be defined for the shortest period of time necessary to achieve the scientific goals of the study.



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Methods for identification of the reason an animal is singly housed must be described in the AUP. Examples include different color stickers or tape on cages/pens, different color cage cards, or other easily deciphered code. Animal housing facilities may develop standardized identification methods.

If the Attending Veterinarian directs husbandry staff to singly house an animal due to veterinary or incompatibility concerns, the PI will be consulted and/or notified as soon as possible.

Animals singly housed due to attrition may be combined, if appropriate.

The AUP must describe what additional enrichment will be offered to singly housed animals. Examples include supplemental enrichment items, positive interaction with humans, periodic release into larger enclosures, and/or the addition of a companion animal in the room or housing area. Exceptions to providing additional environmental enrichment must be scientifically or clinically justified.

References:

National Research Council. (2011). *Guide for the care and use of Laboratory Animals: Eighth edition*. Eighth Edition | The National Academies Press.
<https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/12910/guide-for-the-care-and-use-of-laboratory-animals-eighth>