

Animal Care and Ethics Committee

UNSW Animal Research Adverse Event Standard Operating Procedure

“Institutions must promote compliance with the [Code](#) by ensuring that guidelines for animal care and use are developed in consultation with the ACEC, approved by the ACEC, and implemented and promoted within the institution. Guidelines must include actions required for unexpected adverse events and emergencies, including those that require welfare interventions such as the emergency treatment or humane killing of any animal, to ensure that adverse impacts on animal wellbeing are addressed rapidly. Such guidance should include timeframes for actions, prompt reporting to the ACEC, liaison between animal carers and investigators, and circumstances when consultation with a veterinarian, the performance of a necropsy by a competent person, and access to diagnostic investigations are required (Clause 2.1.5(v)(d))”.

Reporting Requirements

The Animal Care team (animalcare@unsw.edu.au) must be contacted immediately for any unexpected adverse events that are associated with animals overseen by the UNSW ACECs. A follow-up adverse events report must be submitted to the ACECs within one (1) week. All unexpected adverse events and deaths require the submission of a completed [adverse events form](#) to the ACECs from the Chief Investigator or their delegate via their institutional email account. Any supporting documentation (e.g. photographs) must be obtained using institutional devices.

Emergencies Involving Animal Welfare

Investigators must take steps at all times to safeguard the wellbeing of animals by avoiding or minimising known or potential causes of harm, including pain and distress, to the animals.

Emergency steps must include:

- taking prompt action, including alleviating pain and distress; this must take precedence over an individual animal reaching the planned endpoint of the project or the continuation or completion of the project; and
- following the emergency plans on your approved ACEC application, and
- promptly notifying the ACEC in response to unexpected adverse events and emergencies; and
- alleviating unanticipated pain and distress. If necessary, animals must be humanely killed without delay.

If an emergency welfare intervention (treatment or humane killing of an animal) is considered necessary for an animal allocated to a project, animal carers must take reasonable steps to first contact the responsible investigator. However, the welfare of the animal must be the priority at all times and may necessitate immediate intervention. In this case animal carers must promptly advise the responsible investigator of actions taken and the reasons for emergency interventions.

Responsibilities

Investigators have personal responsibility for all matters that relate to the wellbeing of animals they use, including their housing, husbandry and care. This responsibility extends throughout the period of use approved by the ACEC.

Investigators must take steps at all times to safeguard the wellbeing of animals by avoiding or minimising known or potential causes of harm, including pain and distress, to the animals.

Necropsy & Diagnostic Interventions

A necropsy designed to determine the cause of death should be performed by a competent person for animals that die unexpectedly or are humanely killed due to unforeseen complications. When a necropsy cannot be performed immediately, the animal(s) should be refrigerated or frozen (depending on the forecasted time that the necropsy will be performed). In instances where death is undetermined, further diagnostic investigation should be performed including but not limited to histopathological examination and bacterial culturing.

Animal Research Ethics information at UNSW can be found at:

<https://research.unsw.edu.au/research-ethics-and-compliance-support-recs>

For support and suggestions towards the content of this document please contact:

Research Ethics & Compliance Support

Level 3, Rupert Myers Building South

UNSW Australia Kensington Campus

T: +61 2 9385 6868

E: animaethics@unsw.edu.au