



**Florida State University  
Animal Care and Use Committee (ACUC)**

**Mouse Cage Density Policy**

**Purpose:** In accordance with the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (Guide)*, animals must be provided sufficient cage space to express natural postures without touching enclosure walls or ceiling, be able to turn around, and rest comfortably away from soiled areas. This policy describes standards and procedures employed by Laboratory Animal Resources (LAR) on behalf of the FSU ACUC to ensure compliance with *Guide* rodent housing recommendations.

**Applicability:** This policy applies to all investigators housing mice in LAR maintained space unless specific exemption is requested and approved by the ACUC.

**Policy:**

**A. Maximum (per cage) housing density for 67 in<sup>2</sup> cages**

- a. Four adult mice
- b. Single breeding pair
  - i. Offspring density is unrestricted provided pups are less than 21 days old
  - ii. Birth of a second litter requires immediate removal of older litter; this provision is intended to prevent injury of neonates

**B. Maximum (per cage) housing density for 75 in<sup>2</sup> cages**

- a. Five adult mice
- b. Single breeding pair
  - i. Offspring density is unrestricted provided pups are less than 21 days old
  - ii. Birth of a second litter requires immediate removal of older litter; this provision is intended to prevent injury of neonates
- c. Breeding trio including 1 adult male and 2 adult females
  - i. Single or multiple litters are permitted
  - ii. Offspring density is unrestricted provided all pups are less than 14 days old
  - iii. When one or more pups reaches 14 days old, immediate removal of the older litter is required. If litters cannot be differentiated, adults and offspring may be moved to a 144.5 in<sup>2</sup> cage provided that maximum housing densities for the 144.5 in<sup>2</sup> cage is observed
- d. Breeding schemes other than those described above
  - i. All pregnant females must be moved to a separate cage prior to parturition
  - ii. No offspring may be born in the adult only cage

**C. Maximum (per cage) housing density for large (144.5 in<sup>2</sup>) cages**

- a. Ten adult mice, no litters
- b. Four adult mice, including 2 dams with litters, provided all pups are less than 21 days

**Compliance:**

- A. Principal investigators are responsible for adherence to maximum cage density standards and breeding colony management, including prompt weaning of offspring
- B. LAR personnel will monitor cage density as part of routine husbandry duties. Husbandry technicians will flag overcrowded cages with an “overcrowded cage card” and the responsible husbandry technician will notify the principal investigator or designee in writing. Once notified, the investigator will be given 48 hours to correct cage overcrowding.
- C. In the event cage overcrowding is not corrected within 48 hours of notification, the LAR husbandry technician will separate animals to comply with this policy and generate new cage cards with the following information: principal investigator name, protocol number, number of mice, sex, and parent cage identification. The principal investigator will be charged a technical service fee for **each** new cage set up by LAR personnel. LAR or LAR personnel will not be responsible for errors in separated cages.
- D. In the event a principal investigator fails to correct overcrowded cages three times in a three-month period, the LAR Director and Attending Veterinarian will notify the IACUC.

**Animal Welfare:** LAR veterinary personnel are given authority to direct immediate cage change or separation when animal welfare concerns exist.

Approval Date: June 27, 2018

Reviewed: October 27, 2021