

**University of Southern California**  
***Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee***

## **Dropped, Escaped, and Found Rodent Policy**

### **A. Background**

- a. To offer guidance to rodent users to help prevent infection from outside sources to USC rodent colonies.

### **B. Definitions**

- a. Rodent: rats of the genus *Rattus*, and mice of the genus *Mus*, bred for use in research.

### **C. Applicability**

- a. Facility Supervisor, Husbandry personnel, Veterinary Staff, and Principal Investigator and laboratory staff all share the responsibilities outlined below.

### **D. Policy**

- A. Animals found inside of a cage located in an animal room, hallway, procedure room, or cage wash without cage cards or other identification (including “pinkies” and neonates):
  - a. Notify the Facility Supervisor and Veterinary staff.
  - b. Euthanize animals using carbon dioxide from a source tank and perform secondary method of euthanasia (either cervical dislocation for mice or bilateral thoracotomy for rats).
    - i. Neonatal mice and rats 0-6 days old must be euthanized by the following method: Induce hypothermia by laying pups on weigh boat or paper towel over ice-filled bucket until movement ceases followed by decapitation with sharp scissors.
- B. Animals found loose on the floor or in a humane trap inside of an animal room, hallway, procedure room, or cage wash:
  - a. Notify the Facility Supervisor and Veterinary staff.
  - b. Euthanize animals using carbon dioxide from a source tank and perform secondary method of euthanasia (either cervical dislocation for mice or bilateral thoracotomy for rats).
- C. Animals dropped onto the floor inside of an animal housing room or an approved procedure space within the animal facility:
  - a. Immediately and safely capture the animal by using an empty and clean cage. This animal may be returned to the colony only if the animal is captured within minutes of being dropped.
  - b. If the animal is not able to be safely and swiftly captured within a few minutes, or cannot be found, notify Facility Supervisor, Veterinary Staff, and Principal Investigator so the animal may be collected from humane trap later. This animal will then be subjected to the above covered procedures.

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- c. Notify the Facility Supervisor, Veterinary staff, and Principal Investigator
  - d. Inspect the animal to ensure they are not injured. If the animal seems injured, immediately contact Veterinary staff to examine the animal.
  - e. A final option is to euthanize the animal, as it may not be ideal for research use if it was exposed to any potential infectious agents on the floor.
- D. Animals dropped onto the floor outside of the animal facility:
- a. Notify the Facility Supervisor, Veterinary staff, and Principal Investigator.
  - b. Euthanize animals using carbon dioxide from a source tank and perform secondary method of euthanasia (either cervical dislocation for mice or bilateral thoracotomy for rats).
  - c. Alternatively, the animal can be housed in quarantine and undergo standard quarantine testing procedures for mouse or rat pathogens. This process takes 4-5 weeks and will be at the expense of the PI unless the animal was dropped by DAR staff. Please contact DAR for this option.

## A. References

1. United States Government Publishing Office, et al. "Animal Welfare; Regulations and Standards for Birds, Rats, and Mice, Proposed Rules." Print.