# Animal Care and Use Program Policy

**Mouse Housing Densities** 

and Overcrowded Mouse Cages



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## **BACKGROUND**

OHSU has assured the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) that all aspects of animal care and use at OHSU will be conducted following the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (Guide).

#### **POLICY**

- I. Below are the allowed cage density standards based on the <u>Guide</u>. In addition, the following guidelines should be adhered to when breeding mice:
  - A. Small mouse cages (Thoren #1)can hold up to **5 adults of the same sex**, or one **(1) breeding pair** with **one litter**. Housing multiple females with one male is allowed as long the pregnant females are removed prior to giving birth. Any female allowed to give birth while housed in this configuration, is in noncompliance with this policy and "The Guide", and thus may require a report of non-compliance to the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW).
  - B. Large mouse cages (Thoren #2) can hold **8 adults of the same sex**, or a breeding group of **2 females and 1 male** with **one litter per female.** Housing more than 2 females with one male is allowed as long the pregnant females are removed prior to giving birth. Allowing more than two females to give birth while housed in this configuration, is in noncompliance with this policy and "The Guide", and thus may require a report of non-compliance to the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW). Limited numbers of large cages are available and must be scheduled in advance with the Department of Comparative Medicine, Central and Waterfront Campuses (DCM-C) and/or the Division of Comparative Medicine, West Campus (DCM-W).
- II. All litters must be weaned by 21 days of age, unless different weaning times are necessary for medical or strain requirements. All such exceptions to 21 day weaning must be scientifically justified and approved by the IACUC. Cages **may not** contain one newborn litter and another litter over 21 days of age. In such cases, the litter older than 21 days should be weaned as soon as possible but no longer than 48 hours after appearance of the second litter. In the rare case where a normally robust strain has a weaker litter, a veterinarian may, on a case-by-case basis, approve a delay in separation. Investigators are responsible for communicating these exceptions to the DCM-C and/or DCM-W respectively. The approved exception must be posted in the animal room and on the appropriate cages.

MINIMUM SPACE REQUIREMENTS  Minimum cage height is 5 inches					
Individual Mouse Weight	<10 g	10-15 g	15-25 g	25 g	Female + litter
Floor area/animal	6 sq in	8 sq in	12 sq in	15 sq in	Floor area for housing the group = 51 sq. in
Maximum number of mice allowed/cage type					
weight	<10 g	10-15 g	15-25 g	25 g	
Small cage (Thoren #1)*	12	9	6	5	
Large square cage (Thoren #2)**	20	15	10	8	
Duplex cage (Thoren #3)***	9	6	4	3	

<sup>\*</sup>Can hold only 1 adult female or breeding pair with one litter. Floor space is 72.0 sq. in

The DCM-C and the DCM-W have posted the numbers of mice allowed per cage in all mouse rooms. The Principal Investigator (PI) of each approved protocol is charged with assuring that all lab members working with animals are made aware of these cage density guidelines and that they follow them. **Investigators are responsible for managing their own breeding colonies unless formal arrangements have been made with DCM-C or DCM-W to provide colony management, and are therefore responsible for separating animals when appropriate and properly identifying each cage with complete information. For details concerning proper labeling of cages, contact DCM-C on the Central and Waterfront campuses and DCM-W on the West Campus.** 

III. Cages that are out of compliance are marked by placing an action card on the cage instructing research staff to correct the problem. DCM-C /DCM-W staff notifies the investigator's lab on the day the problem is identified to allow the lab member the opportunity to correct the problem within 3 days, unless it is an issue that warrants immediate action. If after 3 days the cage(s) are still in need of separating, DCM-C/DCM-W technicians will separate them into the appropriate number of cages and mark them with separation cards. **The PI's account will be charged for this service.** Non-compliance to this policy and "The Guide" may require a report to the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW).

## **AUTHORITY**

## **PHS Policy**

The PHS requires institutions to use the <u>Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory</u>
<u>Animals</u> (Guide) as a basis for developing and implementing an institutional program for activities involving animals.

## **REFERENCES**

Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. 2011, page 56.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Can hold only 2 adult females and 1 male with litters. Floor space is 121.0 sq. in.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> Floor space is 55.0 sq. in