

Institutional Animal Care & Use Program - UTEP	
Title: Physical Restraint of Unanesthetized Research Animals	
Policy#: 022	Date in Effect: 21 November 2014
Version #: B	Rev Date: 22 June 2020
In Effect <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rescinded <input type="checkbox"/>	Date Rescinded:

A) RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of all personnel using animals at UTEP to abide by this policy.

It is the responsibility of the IACUC to review for approval, properly justified requests for an exception to this policy.

B) APPLICATION

It is frequently necessary to physically restrain animals during examination as well as while administering substances and collecting samples, and this has the potential to cause pain or distress that cannot be controlled. In most cases, only a short period (15 minutes or less), in a species-specific restraint device, is required. All physical restraint procedures in awake, non-anesthetized animals must be described in detail in the protocol. Occasionally administrations, sample collections, treatments or other experimental manipulations require a prolonged period of physical restraint in unanesthetized animals, which should be avoided unless essential to the research objectives. Convenience is not an adequate justification for the use of prolonged restraint.

This policy is intended to ensure that:

- 1) The method of restraint is appropriate for the species of animal.
- 2) The period of restraint is the minimum required for experimental objectives.
- 3) Documentation that the personnel performing the restraint have been appropriately trained.
- 4) When prolonged physical restraint is necessary, the physical, physiological and psychological effects on the animal are minimized if at all possible, unless scientific justification has been provided and accepted in the interest of avoiding the invalidation or compromise of experimental data.

C) DEFINITIONS

- 1) Physical restraint - Physical restraint is the use of manual or mechanical means to limit some or all of an animal's normal movement for the purpose of examination, collection of samples, drug administration, therapy, or experimental manipulation.
- 2) During physical restraint, an animal is prevented from making normal postural adjustments.
- 3) Prolonged restraint – Continuously restraining an animal for greater than 15 minutes.
- 4) Brief restraint – Restraining an animal for 15 minutes or less.

D) PROCEDURES

- 1) Brief restraint procedures of 15 minutes or less need to be described in the protocol but do not require justification.
- 2) Prolonged restraint procedures of greater than 15 minutes need to be described in the protocol AND must be justified.
- 3) The following criteria should guide the investigator in the restraint of animals:
 - a) Restraint devices should not be considered a normal method of housing, and must be justified in the animal use protocol.
 - b) Restraint devices should not be used simply as a convenience in handling or managing animals. *I.e.*, manual restraint is preferred over device-mediated restraint if study objectives can be achieved with a comparable duration of restraint and degree of stress to the animal.
 - c) A photo/ diagram and/or description with specifications (to include the material used to construct the device, as well as its inner and outer dimensions and the location, number and size of breathing or access openings) should be included as a part of the protocol to facilitate review of the proposed device by the Attending Veterinarian and IACUC.
 - d) Alternatives to prolonged physical restraint should be considered.
 - e) The period of restraint should be the minimum required to accomplish the research objectives.
 - f) Animals to be placed in restraint devices for prolonged restraint should be given training (with positive reinforcement) to adapt to the equipment and

personnel, unless adequate scientific justification is provided to support an exception.

- g) Animals that fail to adapt should be removed from the study.
- h) Provision should be made for observation of the animal that is under prolonged restraint at appropriate intervals, as determined by the IACUC and approved in the animal use protocol.