

## **PHYSICAL RESTRAINT - DEFINITIONS, POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

### **Physical Restraint Definitions**

- "**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" (p. 29, "Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals," 8<sup>th</sup> ed., National Research Council, 2011).
- **Prolonged restraint** includes any procedure involving restraint for a duration of time which could lead to distress. Distress is present when the animal is unable to compensate in response to a stressor.
- Although the definition of **prolonged restraint** may vary depending on the species of animal and the type of restraint, the IACUC at the University of Vermont considers any restraint which prevents an animal from making normal postural adjustments for a period of greater than 30 minutes to be prolonged.

### **Physical Restraint Policy and Guidelines**

"Prolonged restraint should be avoided unless it is essential for achieving research objectives and is specifically approved by the IACUC . . . The period of restraint should be the minimum required to accomplish the research objectives." "When restraint devices are used, they should be specifically designed to accomplish research goals that are impossible or impractical to accomplish by other means or to prevent injury to animals or personnel." "Habituation (acclimation) of the animal to the restraint device should be considered when the animal may be repeatedly restrained over the course of a study or medical treatment, or restrained for an extended period of time." (Position statement, American Society of Laboratory Animal Practitioners)

A protocol which utilizes prolonged restraint must include a plan for appropriate monitoring of animals throughout the **entire period of restraint** and a description of how stress and/or distress will be evaluated. If unanticipated distress is encountered with use of any physical restraint, it should be promptly reported to the veterinary staff.

- Restraint devices should be suitable in size, design, and operation to minimize discomfort, pain, distress and the potential for injury to the animal and the research staff.
- Restraint devices are not considered normal methods of housing.
- Restraint devices should not be used simply as a convenience in handling or managing animals.
- Veterinary care should be provided if lesions or illnesses associated with restraint are observed. The presence of lesions, illness, or severe behavioral change often necessitates temporary or permanent removal of the animal from restraint.
- The purpose of the restraint and its duration should be clearly explained to the personnel involved with the study.