

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. 11, "Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals," National Research Council, 1996).
- **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. A stressor is a situation or condition that causes an animal to try to compensate.
- **Planned restraint** includes any procedure involving restraint that is of short duration but is of such intensity that it could lead to distress.
- **Planned prolonged restraint** is considered distressful.

Physical Restraint Policy and Guidelines

Prolonged restraint, or restraint of an unacclimated animal, except for purposes of acclimating the animal, should be avoided unless it is essential for achieving research objectives and is approved by the IACUC.

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.

- The protocol 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 Office of Animal Care Management.
- Restraint devices should be suitable in size, design, and operation to minimize discomfort or injury to the animal.
- Restraint devices are not to be considered normal methods of housing.
- Restraint devices should not be used simply as a convenience in handling or managing animals.
- The period of restraint should be the minimum required to accomplish the research objectives.
- 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.