

Reporting Animal Welfare Concerns



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

September 23, 2022

TO: Addressees

FROM: Acting Deputy Director for Intramural Research, NIH

SUBJECT: Communicating Animal Care and Use Concerns within the NIH Intramural Research Program

This memorandum affirms my commitment to maintain full and open communications regarding animal care and use in the NIH Intramural Research Program (IRP). I feel strongly that all IRP staff must clearly and thoroughly understand NIH management and administrative practices to best enhance our research environment. The care and use of animals in NIH research requires compliance with Federal laws, regulations, and policies.

Anyone in the NIH IRP, whether an employee or contractor, who has concerns regarding the care and use of animals in research at NIH should voice those concerns *anonymously* through the **Reporting Animal Welfare Concerns** link on the Office of Animal Care and Use (OACU) website (<https://oacu.oir.nih.gov/>) or *directly* to one of the following:

- Institute/Center (IC) Animal Program Director or Facility Veterinarian
- Chair or members of the IC Animal Care and Use Committee (ACUC)
- Director, OACU: 301-496-5424
- Me in my role as the Institutional Official

Concerns relayed through any of these individuals will be reviewed and corrective measures instituted as described in NIH Policy Manual Chapter 3040-2: [Animal Care and Use in the Intramural Program](#).

The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) has issued **Guidance on Prompt Reporting** of animal welfare concerns which directs expeditious reporting of any of the incidents described below to one of the individuals listed previously.

Reportable incidents include, but are not limited to:

- Conditions that jeopardize the health or well-being of animals, including natural disasters, accidents, and mechanical failures, resulting in actual harm or death to animals.
- Conduct of animal-related activities without appropriate ACUC review and approval.
- Failure to adhere to ACUC-approved protocols.
- Implementation of any significant change to ACUC-approved protocols without prior ACUC approval.
- Conduct of animal-related activities beyond the expiration date established by the ACUC.
- Chronic failure to provide space for animals in accordance with recommendations of the *Guide*.
- Participation in animal-related activities by individuals who have not been appropriately trained.
- Failure to monitor animals post-procedurally as necessary to ensure well-being.
- Failure to maintain appropriate animal-related records (e.g., identification, medical, husbandry).
- Failure to ensure death of animals after euthanasia procedures.
- Failure of animal care and use personnel to carry out veterinary orders (e.g., treatments).

If you are uncertain about whether an incident or activity should be reported, please report it.

In summary, any individual who has concerns related to the use of animals in research at NIH must voice those concerns. I stress that NIH will not tolerate any reprisal against an individual who has come forward with concerns involving the care and use of animals. Such reprisal is prohibited by law and perpetrators are subject to sanctions. Individuals who feel that a personnel action has been taken against them because they reported an apparent violation of animal care and use requirements should present their case to their supervisor, their IC Director, the NIH Director, the Office of the Inspector General, or the Office of Special Counsel. If individuals allege any form of discrimination, they should file their complaint with the Office of Equal Opportunity.

Please post this memorandum in all areas where animals are used and direct questions or comments regarding the intent or contents to me or to the Director, OACU.

Nina F. Schor, M.D., Ph.D.

Addressees:

IC Directors and Scientific Directors
IC Lab/Branch Chiefs
IC ACUC Members and Animal Program Directors
IC Facility Veterinarians and Animal Facility Managers
Animal Care Staff Members
NIH IRP Principal Investigators and Animal Users

