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FCMR-RPA

15 May 2020

**MEMORANDUM FOR INSTITUTIONS OVERSEEN BY THE ANIMAL CARE AND USE
REVIEW OFFICE**

SUBJECT: Guidance on the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals in COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2 Research

1. References

- a. DOD Instruction 3216.01 (Use of Animals in DoD Conducted and Supported Research and Training).
- b. AR 40-33 (The Care and Use of Laboratory Animals in DoD Programs).
- c. FAQ on Animal Coronavirus Testing, 22 April 2020,
https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/one_health/downloads/faq-public-on-companion-animal-testing.pdf
- d. Memorandum, Defense Health Agency, Health Affairs, 23 May 2015, subject: Accreditation of Army Veterinarians through the United States Department of Agriculture-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's (USDA-APHIS) National Veterinary Accreditation Program (NVAP)
- e. Veterinary Accreditation, 31 December 2019,
https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/nvap/ct_areavet
- f. Evaluation for SARS-CoV-2 Testing in Animals, 14 April 2020,
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/animal-testing.html>
- g. COVID-19 Pandemic Response Resources and FAQs for Animal Care and Use Programs, 10 April 2020,
https://olaw.nih.gov/sites/default/files/200408_pandemicFAQ_slides_handout.pdf
- h. COVID-19 Pandemic Contingency Planning for Animal Care and Use Programs, 6 May 2020, <https://olaw.nih.gov/covid-19.htm>
- i. Flexibilities for Assured Institutions for Activities of Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees (IACUCs) Due to COVID-19, 16 March 2020,
<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-20-088.html>

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j. Strategies to Optimize the Supply of PPE and Equipment, 5 May 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/index.html>

k. Guidelines for use of personal protective equipment (PPE) during the COVID-19 pandemic when demand exceeds supply, 19 April 2020, <https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19/guidelines-ppe-covid-19-pandemic-demand-exceeds>

2. Purpose. Provides guidance for the care and use of laboratory animals in COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2 research, development, testing, and evaluation (RDT&E).

3. Background. The impact of SARS-CoV-2 on laboratory animals is an evolving situation and little is known. Humans may be able to transmit SARS-CoV-2 to animal species used in research, including dogs, cats, ferrets, and nonhuman primates. This supplements the 19 MAR 2020 ACURO guidance entitled, “ACURO Guidance During the COVID-19 Pandemic”.

4. Screening of animals. Prior to use in SARS-CoV-2 research, commonly referred to as COVID-19 research, the SARS-CoV-2 status of the animals must be considered. The most appropriate method of screening laboratory animals prior to their use on COVID-19 research will be a decision that involves institutional leadership and the research and veterinary staff. Commercial testing for various species exists. A veterinarian from the institution, ideally with USDA Accreditation, should coordinate with the corresponding State Animal Health Official (SAHO) in advance of screening. Before implementing screening, institutions should fully develop a plan for all actions that will be taken based on test result outcomes. These actions include: notifications through Institutional leadership; reporting to outside agencies; impact on intended use of the animal; impact on individual animal and colony welfare (e.g., would isolation be required).

5. Animal use protocols. For COVID-19 research, the potential impact of the study animals SARS-CoV-2 status must be addressed in the animal use protocol. This does not mean screening or testing is required—it means the need for testing and impact of the animals’ status (positive or negative) will be addressed in the protocol.

6. Presumptive positive tests. Positive test results are presumptive until confirmed by the USDA’s National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL). ACURO recommends that presumed positive SARS-CoV-2 results be confirmed by NVSL. Exceptions are those laboratory animals intentionally infected as part of a research protocol.

7. Reporting to ACURO. Both presumptive and confirmed positive cases will be reported to ACURO within 5 business days. The initial report will include the species,

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number of animals, type of sample tested, testing method, protocol information, and a contact to whom further questions can be addressed. A final report will be provided to ACURO that includes any further testing results and the planned disposition for the animal. Reporting is preferred by email to: usarmy.detrick.medcom-usarmmc.other.acuro@mail.mil. Reporting is not required for animals intentionally infected with SARS-CoV-2 as part of an IACUC-approved study.

8. Reporting to USDA. Pursuant to 9 CFR § 161 and USDA guidance, accredited veterinarians are to report positive cases to the USDA Area Veterinarian-in-Charge (AVIC) and the SAHO. ACURO recommends all presumed positive cases be reported to the USDA. Prior coordination with the AVIC and SAHO will ensure a mutual understanding of reporting expectations and procedures. Animals intentionally infected with SARS-CoV-2 for research purposes need not be reported.

9. Safety and Personal protective equipment (PPE). Institutions should review the current literature on the subject, evaluate the risk in their situation, and implement appropriate engineering controls, practices, and PPE usage to prevent transmission to animals. Institutions should consider fomites and close contact with asymptomatic humans as possible means of transmission to laboratory animals. Animal facility managers are encouraged to refer to CDC and AVMA guidelines for practices to conserve PPE resources (see references j and k).

10. Additional resources for Army programs. A COVID-19 Army Veterinary Services operational planning team with expertise from the DHA Veterinary Services Branch, Deputy Chief of Staff for Public Health Veterinary Services Directorate, and Army Public Health Center Veterinary Services and Public Health Sanitation Directorate has provided resources for veterinary issues related to COVID-19. Veterinary personnel are encouraged to review:
<https://www.milsuite.mil/book/community/spaces/armyveterinaryservices/one-health/emergent-health-events>.

11. As the COVID-19 pandemic is a constantly evolving situation, Institutions should stay abreast of new developments. ACURO will issue additional or revised guidance as needed. Current information is located at:
https://mrhc.amedd.army.mil/index.cfm/collaborate/research_protections/acuro

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12. Questions, communications, official submissions should be submitted to the ACURO inbox usarmy.detrick.medcom-usamrmc.other.acuro@mail.mil.



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