Identifying Single Housed Animals SOP

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1. Purpose

To describe the procedures for classifying animals that are single housed and labeling cages appropriately. All single housed animals on campus must be identified with the reason they are housed singly.

2. Responsibility

1. **Husbandry Personnel and ULAM Veterinary Personnel**: Are responsible for identifying and alerting investigative personnel of single housed animals.
2. **Investigative Personnel**: Are responsible for labeling all single housed animals.

3. Definitions

1. **Acetate**: A colored, plastic card placed over animal cage cards that aid in communication between husbandry, ULAM veterinary and investigative personnel. Acetate colors correspond to a specific animal care procedure and could be red, green, clear, yellow or blue. In certain settings, such as aquatic or outdoor housing areas, acetates may not be easily utilized. In those cases animal identification procedures should be agreed upon by veterinary and investigative personnel as needed and communications will be documented in relevant medical records.
2. **Enrichment**: The use of structures and resources to encourage species specific behaviors and to enhance psychological health and well-being of various species defined in this document according to the requirements of The Guide, eighth edition

4. Procedures

If there is not a laboratory managed procedure for identifying singly housed animals, follow the steps below.

1. **Classifying Single Housed Animals**

   1. Identify single housed animals using one of the following exemption codes:
      1. **A = Attrition**: Animal is now single housed due to lack of suitable litter mate, death, weaning, separation, or new arrivals shipped separately.
      2. **Personnel may contact veterinary personnel if pairing or group housing animals is desired following attrition.**
      3. **F = Fighting**: Includes males and females that have been separated due to aggression or demonstrated and documented social incompatibility.
      4. **P = Protocol Specific Reasons**: Animals must be individually housed due to approved scientific and/or protocol specific reasons.
      5. **V = Veterinary Treatment**: Animals must be individually housed due to ongoing veterinary treatments.
      6. **B = Breeding**: Animal must be individually housed either because it is a stud male that will fight with other males and is not currently being bred to a female or because it is a pregnant female removed from its home cages to prevent overcrowding resulting from multiple litters in a cage.

2. **Labeling Cage Cards Containing Single Housed Animals**

   1. Investigative personnel or husbandry personnel, apply a blue plastic Post-It® Filing Tab with the date using appropriate exemption code letter to top of cage card if exemption reason is known.
   2. Identify groups of animals that are singly housed with the same exemption code with a yellow acetate flagged with blue Post-It® Filing Tab, along with the date, on back of the animal room door.
   3. Husbandry personnel, flag cages containing single housed animals with unknown exemption codes during daily health checks with a blue vertical acetate and blank blue Post-It® Filing Tab.
   4. Husbandry personnel, record the date on blue acetate when singly housed animal was first discovered.
   5. Notify the husbandry supervisor via the building husbandry supervisor email address if investigative personnel have not labeled cages appropriately within 7 days, include the following information in the email:
      1. Principal Investigator (PI)
      2. Room location
      3. Laboratory contact
   6. Supervisors contact the laboratory and husbandry will add the date the laboratory was contacted to blue vertical acetate.
   7. Re-report cage to supervisor if not appropriately labeled after an additional 7 days from the date laboratory was contacted. Husbandry supervisor reports investigative personnel to the facility faculty veterinarian for follow-up. Based off of this evaluation the faculty veterinarian will determine whether the concern warrants contacting IACUC or not.
   8. Remove blue Post-It® Filing Tab if animals were previously housed singly, but are now grouped or paired.

3. **Enrichment**

   1. Singly housed mammals must be provided more than one enrichment item.
1. Provide additional enrichment item(s) at the first cage change when the mammal is noted to be singly housed and the code for additional enrichment noted on the Animal Room Log sheet.
2. See the Environmental Enrichment for Animals SOP for details.

5. Related Documents
   1. Animal Care Identification and Communication Procedures
   2. OBSOLETE - Social Introduction of Laboratory Animal Species
   4. Environmental Enrichment for Animals SOP