

**VA NORTHEAST OHIO HEALTHCARE SYSTEM  
Louis Stokes Cleveland DVAMC  
Medical Research Service  
Subcommittee on Research Safety Policy**

**Effective Date: September 13, 2023**

**SOP Title: EMERGENCY PREPARDNESS FOR THE ANIMAL RESEARCH FACILITY**

**SOP Number: SRS--014**

**SOP Version: .11**

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**1. PURPOSE:** To establish an Emergency Policy that serves the Louis Stokes Cleveland Department of Veteran Affairs Medical Center (Louis Stokes DVAMC) Animal Research Facility (ARF) in the event of natural disasters, militant activities, or equipment malfunction. The ARF in Medical Research Service provides animal procurement, husbandry, health care, and scientific support for programs using animals in research and teaching. The ARF is responsible for emergency planning and implementation regarding the research animals.

**2. POLICY:** This policy has been implemented to provide care and support of animals housed in the ARF and in Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)-approved laboratory space in the event of an emergency.

**3. PROCEDURES FOR ANIMAL CARE:**

**a) Animal Observation and Health Maintenance**

(1) The animals in the ARF are specifically bred or maintained for laboratory research. The health and welfare of these animals are the primary goal of Medical Research Service. Some rodent colonies may be genetically unique and irreplaceable. Investigators having genetically irreplaceable animals are encouraged to take advantage of embryo and or/sperm cryopreservation available at Case Western Reserve University and commercial sources to safeguard their colonies in the event of loss.

In general, all laboratory animals must be housed within the ARF. A small number of investigators may be approved on an Animal Component of Research Protocol (ACORP)-specific and/or procedure-specific basis by the IACUC to house animals in their laboratory space. This approval may be given if the ARF is not able to meet protocol-specific special housing requirements.

(2) Personnel in the ARF observe the animals under their care daily and report abnormalities to the ARF Supervisor, the consulting veterinarian, and the investigator. Failure to closely observe the animals in the facility may result in conditions being left untreated. Adverse observations need to be reported in a timely manner, and adequate lighting and power are needed for this to occur.

For animals housed in investigator laboratory space, the Principal Investigator (PI) is directly, or via delegation to his/her staff, responsible for daily care and observation, monitoring of environmental conditions, and the reporting of sick animals to the Attending Veterinarian.

**b) Feed and water**

(1) Research animals must have a continuous supply of feed which maintains a constant nutritional formula. Research projects may utilize specialized diets that have been specifically altered or may vary in one or several ingredients.

(2) Research animals must have a continuous supply of potable water. The water supplied to the ARF is obtained from the City of Cleveland's chlorinated/fluorinated water supply. Rats and mice receive autoclaved city water or Hydropac® filter-sterilized water pouches (each pouch contains 13oz of water; each Hydropac® tote contains 25 pouches); a minimum of 25 Hydropac® totes are on hand at all times. This water may be used in an emergency for other species.

(3) Lack of adequate water supplies can cause life-threatening situations in the animal population. Most mammals can survive without feed for days or weeks, but they cannot live beyond 2-3 days without water. The availability of water is even more important for rodents that have a higher basal metabolic rate.

(4) Water is essential for the washing of cages, equipment, and for sanitation purposes. Inadequate water pressure and temperatures adversely affect the levels of sanitation by allowing bacteria and viruses to remain on the equipment and multiply. This may cause potentially serious health problems for the animals and ARF personnel caring for them.

(5) Water is also necessary for washing hands after working with animals and after using toilet facilities.

**c) Personnel to Care for Animals**

(1) Animal care in the ARF is provided by an Attending Veterinarian, 2 consulting veterinarians, an animal research facility supervisor, veterinary technician and/or laboratory animal technicians. These personnel ensure that proper standards of animal care are continuously maintained in this facility.

(2) Failure to maintain this staff may have adverse effects on the proper standards of animal care in the ARF.

**d) Communication**

(1) The Veterinarians can be reached by email, cell, house or office phone. The ARF Supervisor can be reached by email, cell or office phone. The ARF technicians can be reached by email, cell, or office phones. If a technician is deaf, communication will be via email and text messaging. The VA office phone for the ARF Supervisor and Veterinarian is extension 66109. The VA office phone for the ARF animal technicians is extension 64642. Other phone numbers and email addresses are posted on the door of the Consulting Veterinarian's office, in the ARF hallway and outside of the Research office. All personal information is shared among research staff including the Associate Chief of Staff (ACOS) and Administrative Officer (AO) for research, engineering, boiler plant, and police services. An emergency calling tree is in place.

(2) In the event of an emergency, and the above personnel cannot be contacted, the Associate Chief of Staff/Research and Administrative Officer/Research may be notified by phone at extension 64660 during working hours. After working hours, the VA Police Service can contact them at home. To report an engineering emergency, i.e., electrical, Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning

(HVAC), or plumbing, during working hours contact the Engineering Office at extension 64164. Emergencies that occur after hours, weekends, or holidays, contact the Boiler Plant at extension 64180.

**e) Environmental Support**

(1) Environmental support is dependent upon continuous electric power and a functional Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning (HVAC) system. For emergency power outages, there is a back-up generator that supports the Medical Center; the emergency generator covers air supply, ventilation, and lighting. Failure in any one component of the environmental support can have an adverse impact ranging from minor annoyance to unrelieved stress and/or death of animals.

(2) It is extremely important to maintain the temperature and humidity of the animal rooms within targeted thermoneutral zones.

- a. Animal housing rooms (within the ARF) are maintained at temperatures that range from 68 - 75° F and a humidity level between 30 and 70%. Each room has a temperature set point and should be maintained within +/- 2° F of this set point. Room temperature is manually checked daily by ARF staff and computer monitored continuously with alarm text messages to the ACOS, Attending Veterinarian, and ARF Supervisor when temperatures are out of the thermoneutral range. A simulated overheat test is conducted at least annually to ensure the monitors and notification system are functioning properly.
- b. Animal satellite housing rooms (outside the ARF) are maintained at temperatures that range from 68 - 75° F and a humidity level between 30 and 70%. Each room has a temperature set point and should be maintained within +/- 2° F of this set point. Room temperature and humidity are manually checked daily by the Principal Investigator (PI) and/or designated and trained research staff. Satellite housing room temperatures are also computer monitored continuously with alarm text messages to the Principal Investigator and/or designated research staff when temperatures are out of the thermoneutral range. When housed outside of the ARF, animal housing conditions become the responsibility of the PI.
  - i. The IACUC Coordinator will inform a Principal Investigator of his/her emergency responsibility for extramural housing sites and collect contact names and cell phone numbers of personnel assuming this responsibility.
  - ii. The IACUC Coordinator will inform the Research Safety Coordinator (RSC) of newly approved extramural research animal housing sites and transmitting the names and cell phone numbers of responsible personnel. The IACUC Coordinator will also notify the RSC of discontinued extramural housing sites.

It is the PI's responsibility to inform ARF personnel when animals are to be housed in a satellite housing room. In the event of an emergency within a satellite animal housing room, ARF staff may need to assist the PI and/or lab personnel.

(3) Complete air exchanges must be a minimum of 10 changes per hour; air is not recycled. Adequate ventilation is required to protect personnel and minimize exposure to allergenic aerosols. Airflow data is validated by an outside contractor on an annual basis.

(4) Animals are best adapted physiologically in this environment, causing the least effect on their metabolism and behavior.

(5) Extreme fluctuations or alterations in temperature and humidity will alter the physiologic parameters of the animal and can result in death. HVAC system disruption may cause health problems (respiratory disease) in animals and employees, as well as an accumulation of annoying odors and/or harmful fumes.

(6) A long-term interruption of the steam supply during the colder months may cause a hazardous drop in animal room temperature. If a steam outage occurs, portable space heaters will be requested from Engineering Service.

(7) Light cycles vary from 10-hour light / 14-hour dark to 12-hour light / 12-hour dark.

Alterations in light cycles may result in loss of or invalidation of important research data. Light cycles are verified daily.

#### **f. Contamination Control**

(1) Control of contamination is maintained by established sanitation procedures and the supply of 100% fresh air exchange. Equally important are the proper storage of food supplies, refrigeration of carcasses, and an adequate clean water supply and sewer support.

(2) The failure to maintain contamination control may result in significant health problems in the animals and employees. Control is dependent upon personnel following established sanitation procedures and the availability of personal protective equipment and appropriate disinfectants when indicated. Power and water are needed to operate sanitizing equipment.

#### **g. Security**

(1) Animal rooms are to be secured at all times when not in use. A magnetic locking device secures a set of emergency exit doors in the ARF; they can only be opened with assistance from the VA Police Service except in emergency situations. Rooms outside of the ARF housing laboratory animals must be locked at all times when personnel are not in the room.

(2) When suspicious individuals are seen in the ARF, personnel are instructed to contact the VA Police Service at extension 64207.

#### **h. Research Support**

(1) Investigators in Medical Research are contacted when health problems, power outages, temperature changes, etc. may affect the condition of their animals. In the event of emergency situations, researchers are contacted as soon as possible. If contact with an investigator is not possible, necessary changes to maintain proper animal care may be made without their input. (This could result in the loss of important data for research projects.)

(2) If disruption of the ability to conduct “business as usual” is of a significant duration (weeks to months), alternative strategies for completion of ongoing studies and initiation of new studies may need to be considered. Entry into the ARF may be limited to essential personnel.

#### **i. IACUC Function and Grant Support**

(1) The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and Research Office support are essential to maintaining research in compliance with regulatory guidelines and to facilitate the grant application and funding process.

(2) If disruption of the ability to conduct “business as usual” is of a significant duration (weeks to months) alternative strategies to accomplish administrative functions and conduct required regulatory meetings and inspections will be needed.

#### 4. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:

##### a. Fire

(1) In the event of a fire or fire drill, the **RACE** Procedure must be implemented:

Remove yourself and others from danger;  
Activate an alarm pull box or call extension 2222;  
Confine the fire by closing doors; and  
Evacuate personnel from the area.

When the fire alarm system is activated:

- A. The fire alarm siren and audio location identification will have four cycles; thereafter, the siren and audio locator will be limited to the floor of origination.
- B. Strobe lights throughout the corridors will flash throughout the entire medical center until the Cleveland Fire Department renders the situation “clear”.
- C. A pager, which must be worn by hearing-impaired personnel, will vibrate when the fire alarm system is activated; the pager screen will display the floor of origination.

##### The OSHA Standard on Employee Alarm Systems:

###### 1910.165(b)(1)

The employee alarm system shall provide warning for necessary emergency action as called for in the emergency action plan, or for reaction time for safe escape of employees from the workplace or the immediate work area, or both.

###### 1910.165(b)(2)

The employee alarm shall be capable of being perceived above ambient noise or light levels by all employees in the affected portions of the workplace. Tactile devices may be used to alert those employees who would not otherwise be able to recognize the audible or visual alarm

Employees will evacuate their work area/building until the VA Police Service or Cleveland Fire Department issues further instructions. Any alterations in

(2) Research Investigators will be notified regarding the status of their animals as soon as possible. Any alterations in the routine care of the animals will be addressed at this time. In the event that a fire has occurred *after hours*, an attempt will be made to notify all ARF employees to report to work. The Veterinarians, Associate Chief of Staff/Research and Administrative Officer/Research will also be notified by Police Services to assess the situation.

(3) Animals will be checked as soon as access to the facility is permitted by fire and police personnel. Animals suffering from injuries or smoke inhalation will be examined and treated as quickly as possible. Seriously injured animals will be euthanized as deemed necessary by the Consulting Veterinarian. Dead animals will be removed from cages and placed in the ARF cold room, which is a designated cold room for animal carcasses only. An alternate cold room may be utilized if the ARF cold room has been damaged. Arrangements for disposal will be made.

(4) If a fire has destroyed the proper housing of animals, they will be relocated to alternate rooms.

(5) In the event that any of the animal feed supply is destroyed, the local feed vendor will be contacted for immediate replacements. Any feed that cannot be obtained from the local vendor will be ordered for overnight delivery from the distributor. Spoiled or contaminated feed will be discarded.

(6) If the water supply is affected, water will be brought in from another facility. The ARF maintains a supply of Hydropac® filter-sterilized water pouches for rodents (each pouch contains 13oz of water; each Hydropac® tote contains 25 pouches); a minimum of 25 Hydropac® totes are on hand at all times. Pouches are made of a single use, disposable, FDA grade flexible film.

(7) Electrical power and the ventilation system are the responsibility of the Engineering Service. If electrical power is lost, the emergency generators will be activated; transfer will take place within 10 seconds.

(8) Contamination control will be handled by the Environmental Management Service and ARF personnel. This will entail the cleaning up of any smoke and/or water damage. If the air handling system is functional, all air filters in the affected areas will be changed.

(9) A combined two-hour fire rated partition and smoke barrier exists along the north/south wall in the ARF (the west wall of B-F342). This wall separates the newer area of the ARF from the Medical Center. Most of the animals are housed to the west of this partition. If a fire were to occur east of the fire/smoke partition, only the animals housed in B-F342 and B-F325 would be at risk.

(10) *Only* if time permits will animals be relocated from one side of the fire/smoke partition to the other. Animal rooms designated “Quarantined” will *not* be moved due to the possibility of contaminating other animals or personnel. The ARF Supervisor, the Consulting Veterinarian, the Associate Chief of Staff/Research and Administrative Officer/Research will decide whether the animals will be relocated. ***Human life is not to be jeopardized.***

**a) Flooding**

(1) If flooding is anticipated, animals will be relocated. Animal rooms designated “Quarantined” will *not* be moved due to the possibility of contaminating other animals or personnel. If relocation is *not* possible, animals will be moved to the highest row within their racks and monitored frequently. Research Investigators will be notified regarding the status of their animals as soon as possible. Any alterations in the routine care of the animals will be addressed at this time. In the event that a flood has occurred ***after hours***, an attempt will be made to notify all ARF employees to report to work. The Consulting Veterinarian, Associate Chief of Staff/Research and Administrative Officer/Research will also be notified by Police Services to assess the situation.

(2) In the event of a water main break, where severe flooding occurs, personnel *are not* permitted to enter an animal room until engineering personnel have granted clearance. Animals suffering from injuries or exposure will be examined and treated as quickly as possible. Seriously injured animals will be euthanized as deemed necessary by the Consulting Veterinarian. Dead animals will be removed from cages and placed in the ARF cold room. An alternate cold room may be utilized if the ARF cold room has been damaged. Arrangements for disposal will be made.

(3) Sandbags will be provided by Engineering Service to aid in keeping water from entering non-affected animal rooms.

(4) If a flood within the facility damages the feed supply, the local vendor will be contacted for immediate delivery of new feed. Spoiled or water damaged feed will be discarded.

(5) The City of Cleveland will test the quality of the water if widespread flooding occurs. Bottled water may need to be brought in until the City of Cleveland has proven that the water supply is safe for consumption. The ARF maintains a supply of Hydropac® filter-sterilized water pouches for rodents (each pouch contains 13oz of water; each Hydropac® tote contains 25 pouches); a minimum of 25 Hydropac® totes are on hand at all times. This water may be used in an emergency for other species.

(5) Floors, equipment, etc. will be cleaned and disinfected immediately by Environmental Management Services and ARF personnel. This will aid in the prevention of possible contamination.

#### **b) Tornado**

(1) In the event of a tornado, all personnel will be informed of an impending storm via overhead announcement. In outlying areas, employees must move into center corridors against walls and away from doorways and windows. Animals are not to be moved in the event of a tornado. ***Human life is not to be jeopardized***

(2) Animals will be checked as soon as access to the facility is permitted by fire and police personnel. Animals suffering from injuries will be examined and treated as quickly as possible. Seriously injured animals will be euthanized as deemed necessary by the Consulting Veterinarian. Dead animals will be removed from cages and placed in the ARF cold room. An alternate cold room may be utilized if the ARF cold room has been damaged. Arrangements for disposal will be made.

(3) In the event that a tornado has occurred ***after hours***, an attempt will be made to notify all ARF employees to report to work when it is safe to travel. The Consulting Veterinarian, Associate Chief of Staff/Research and Administrative Officer/Research will also be notified by Police Services to assess the situation. Research Investigators will be notified regarding the status of their animals as soon as possible. Any alterations in the routine care of the animals will be addressed at this time.

(4) If any or all feed is damaged or destroyed due to a tornado, the local vendor will be contacted for replacements. If needed, feed will be shipped by overnight delivery. Spoiled or contaminated feed will be discarded.

(5) If a tornado has disrupted the water supply to the ARF, water will be transported in from other facilities. The ARF maintains a supply of Hydropac® filter-sterilized water pouches for rodents (each pouch contains 13oz of water; each Hydropac® tote contains 25 pouches); a minimum of 25 Hydropac® totes are on hand at all times. This water may be used in an emergency for other species.

(6) If a tornado has destroyed the proper housing of animals, they will be relocated to alternate rooms.

(7) The HVAC Shop will be contacted immediately to assess the air handling system. Large fans and cooling units will be used until the necessary repairs have been made. Depending on the estimated time for repair, animals may be relocated to a more suitable area. Animals that cannot be readily relocated (e.g. in testing chambers) will be monitored frequently.

#### **c) Bomb Threat/Bombing**

(1) If a bomb threat is received, the call shall be immediately reported to the VA Police and Security Office, extension 2222. All employees must evacuate the facility if:

- A bomb threat has been received.



- A bombing occurs.

(2) Employees are instructed to evacuate the area/building until the VA Police and Security Office issue further instructions.

(3) NOTE: Animals under anesthesia undergoing surgical procedures may not be left unattended and must be euthanized. Acceptable methods for euthanasia are injection of euthanasia solution, overdose of anesthetic, or thoracotomy under deep anesthesia.

(4) Research Investigators will be notified regarding the status of their animals as soon as possible. Any alterations in the routine care of the animals will be addressed at this time.

(5) In the event that a bombing has occurred *after hours*, an attempt will be made to notify all ARF employees to report to work. The Consulting Veterinarian, Associate Chief of Staff/Research and Administrative Officer/Research will also be notified by Police Services to assess the situation.

(6) Animals will be checked as soon as access to the facility is permitted by fire and police personnel. ***Human life is not to be jeopardized.*** Animals suffering from injuries or smoke inhalation will be examined and treated as quickly as possible. Seriously injured animals will be euthanized as deemed necessary by the Consulting Veterinarian. Dead animals will be removed from cages and placed in the ARF cold room. An alternate cold room may be utilized if the ARF cold room has been damaged. Arrangements for disposal will be made.

(7) If a bomb or subsequent fire has destroyed the proper housing of animals, they will be relocated to alternate rooms.

(8) In the event that a portion or all of the animal feed supply is destroyed, the local feed vendor will be contacted for immediate replacements. Any feed that cannot be obtained from the local vendor will be ordered for overnight delivery from the distributor. Spoiled or contaminated feed will be discarded.

(9) If the water supply is affected, water will be brought in from another facility. The ARF maintains a supply of Hydropac® filter-sterilized water pouches for rodents (each pouch contains 13oz of water; each Hydropac® tote contains 25 pouches); a minimum of 25 Hydropac® totes are on hand at all times. This water may be used in an emergency for other species.

(11) Electrical power and the ventilation system are the responsibility of Engineering Service. If electrical power is lost, the emergency generators will be activated; transfer will take place within 10 seconds.

(10)

(11) Contamination control will be handled by the cleaning up of any bomb residue, smoke, and/or water damage by Environmental Management and ARF personnel. If the air handling system is functional, the HVAC Shop in Engineering Services will change all air filters in the affected areas.

#### **d) Protests and/or disruptive behavior**

If a scheduled protest, an unscheduled protest, or a threat is received, the VA Police Service is to be contacted **immediately** at extension 64207 (Wade Park). VA Police Service will determine what action should be taken in such an event. ***Personnel in the ARF are not to approach anyone who may cause harm to the animals, personnel, or the facility.***

#### **e) Break In**

(1) Any animals that may be loose in the ARF due to vandalism will be captured, identified, and returned to cages. The Consulting Veterinarian will assess the condition of the animals and may euthanize them if necessary. Any animals that die as a result of vandalism will be disposed of in the ARF cold room. If the cold room has also been damaged, an alternate cold room will be utilized until it has been repaired. In the event that a break-in has occurred *after hours*, an attempt will be made to notify all ARF employees to report to work. The Consulting Veterinarian, Associate Chief of Staff/Research and Administrative Officer/Research will also be notified by Police Services to assess the situation.

(2) If the feed has been destroyed and/or tampered with, it will be immediately discarded. An order for the replacement of feed will be placed with a local vendor or shipped in by overnight delivery if needed.

(3) In the event that the water supply has been disrupted, fresh water will be brought in from another facility until repairs have been made. The ARF maintains a supply of Hydropac® filter-sterilized water pouches for rodents (each pouch contains 13oz of water; each Hydropac® tote contains 25 pouches); a minimum of 25 Hydropac® totes are on hand at all times. This water may be used in an emergency for other species.

(4) The HVAC Shop (Engineering Service) is responsible for the ventilation and heating/cooling systems. If vandalism to this system has occurred, they shall be contacted immediately.

(5) The VA Police Service will be contacted at extension 64207. They will determine what action should be taken in such an event.

#### **g. Break Down of Air Handling System**

(1) The HVAC Shop will be contacted immediately to assess the air handling system.

(2) Large fans and cooling units will be used until the necessary repairs have been made.

(3) Depending on the estimated time for repair, animals may be relocated to a more suitable area. Animals that cannot be readily relocated (e.g. in testing chambers) will be monitored frequently. ARF personnel will attempt to contact all research investigators to inform them of the status of their animals.

(4) Excessive levels of humidity and temperature may affect the quality of feed if a breakdown of the air handling system were to occur over an extended period of time. All feed will be closely monitored for spoilage. Spoiled or contaminated feed will be discarded and replaced.

#### **h. Forced Abandonment of the Animal Research Facility**

In the event of a major disaster necessitating abandonment of the Medical Center, animals will be euthanized by qualified personnel unless doing so would pose a risk to personnel. An effort will be made to rescue a small select number of animals identified by prearrangement. *However, human life is not to be jeopardized.*

### **i. Localized Epidemic or Pandemic Infectious Disease Outbreak**

The emergence of a localized or widespread infectious disease of humans can impact ongoing research studies in the following ways:

- (1) Measures to prevent implementation and spread must be implemented.
- (2) Animal care staff may succumb to illness and be unable to work.
- (3) IACUC, Administrative, grants management, safety, police, environmental services may be curtailed or altered.
- (4) Local, state and/or federal guidelines may be promulgated prohibiting certain activities.
- (5) The duration of these impacts may be of short or long duration.

At a minimum, animal care procedures must continue on site. ***However, human life is not to be jeopardized.*** If the Animal Research Facility must be forcibly abandoned, see section **h**.

In the event of a pandemic emergency, the primary point of contact will be the ACOS/Research. The ACOS will interface with the Medical Center administration, the hospital emergency responders, investigators and Research Administration and Safety services as well as the ARF animal care and veterinary staff to oversee and coordinate responses impacting the ARF and the broader Animal Care and Use Program in order to ensure consistency and integration with the Cleveland VA Medical Center response.

***The following procedures may be implemented as needed and/or as directed by authorities internal and external to the VA:***

- j. Animal Care - Daily animal care, observation, provision of adequate veterinary care, provision of uncontaminated feed and water and sanitation procedures must continue.
  - (1) The animal care staff if needed will be divided into two or more separate groups which have no contact with one another to minimize the possibility of contagion to all members of the ARF husbandry staff. This may entail alteration of workdays and work hours for ARF staff members.
  - (2) VA consulting veterinarians may reduce onsite presence but will remain in contact with the ARF staff via email and telephone on an ongoing and continual basis. Transmission of digital images to veterinarians to facilitate remote animal assessment may be used as needed to assist with animal assessment and development of treatment plans.
  - (3) ARF staff administrative activities that can be performed remotely may be accomplished via telework.
  - (4) Animal husbandry procedures (animal observation/provision of feed/water, cage and facility sanitation and provision of medical care and enrichment) will continue as described in ARF standard operating procedures unless lack of sufficient personnel, supplies or infrastructure occur. If any of these insufficiencies should develop, temporary emergency alterations of animal husbandry and care may be implemented. All changes will be consistent with emergency guidance received from regulatory authorities. Pandemic-related changes will result from consultation between the ACOS, Attending Veterinarian and ARF Supervisor, which will be implemented by the ARF Supervisor with communication to the IACUC. All temporary changes implemented will strive to maintain adequate animal health and welfare. If animal health and welfare cannot be satisfactorily maintained, consideration of euthanasia of impacted animals will be made as a last resort.

- k. ARF Entry
  - (1) Use the hand sanitizer by the door.
  - (2) Spray the bottoms of your shoes with disinfectant.
  - (3) Put on a surgical cap, surgical mask, nitrile gloves and a disposable gown. These will be kept on until you exit the ARF.
  - (4) Use correct room entry order and disinfect all surfaces of your gloves with Clidox before entering another room.
- l. ARF Exit:
  - (1) Place your gloves, gown, cap and mask into the labeled containers.
  - (2) Use the hand sanitizer before touching the door to exit.
  - (3) Spray the bottoms of your shoes with disinfectant.
- m. PPE and procedures to limit contagion between personnel.
  - (1) PPE and disinfectants adequate to prevent contagion and when indicated, social distancing of >6 feet, must be used by all personnel entering and working in the ARF.
  - (2) If PPE is in short supply, the following guidelines for reuse of disposable PPE may be used:
    - i. A single surgical mask, cap and gloves should be used by each person per day. Gloves will need to be replaced if they tear.
    - ii. Masks, disposable gowns, nitrile gloves and surgical caps may be collected in separate rat microisolator cages at the exit doors for autoclaving and reuse as long as they are not damaged.
      - 1. **REMEMBER: A surgical mask is NOT protective against airborne infectious agents but may protect others against your coughs and sneezes and may provide limited protection against direct spray of infectious fluids.**
  - (3) If the infectious agent survives for more than a few minutes on environmental surfaces, disinfection of all high touch surfaces must be done multiple times per day using a suitable disinfectant.
  - (4) Personnel working within the ARF should wear nitrile gloves which are disinfected before and after touching high touch surfaces.
  - (5) Avoid touching your face with your hands. If a facemask is worn, do not adjust or remove/replace it or adjust your glasses. Masks and glasses may be affixed to your face with tape to prevent slippage and condensation on glasses prior to entering the ARF.
- n. Research Studies in Progress may be completed. Research personnel entering the ARF are limited to essential staff. Students and guests are prohibited. Surgeries must be approved on a case by case basis.
- o. New Research Studies:
  - (1) Can the live animal portion of this study be postponed?
  - (2) Can data analysis or benchwork be prioritized at this time?
  - (3) Can breeding colonies of rodents be limited or downsized? Consider cryopreservation of irreplicable lines.
- p. Regulatory oversight by the R&D Committee, IACUC and Subcommittee for Research Safety
  - i. When the risk of contagion is deemed to be unacceptably high, R&D Committee, IACUC, SRS may be conducted virtually.

q. Communication

- (1) When the risks of face to face communication are deemed to be unacceptably high, communication may be via telephone or email. Skype or other video software as well as sending of digital images and/or videos to the Consulting Veterinarian to address emergent animal health needs.
- (2) Communication of pandemic-related operational and procedural changes to the IACUC, investigative personnel and ARF staff will be made via email and posting of signage at the ARF entry points and other appropriate areas.

r. Administrative functions may be conducted remotely via telephone and/or email communication.

- (1) IACUC – ext. 66109
- (2) Safety – ext. 64263
- (3) Grants Management – ext. 66785
- (4) Administrative Officer/Research - ext. 64657

5. REFERENCES:

- i. Medical Center Policy 138-038 (Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan) dated June 15, 2012.
  - ii. NOT-OD-20-088: Flexibilities for Assured Institutions for Activities of Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUCs) due to COVID019, 2020
  - iii. NOT-OD-06-052: Guidance on the use of Telecommunications for IACUC Meetings und the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 2020.
  - iv. NIH-DVR Pandemic Plan, 2020
  - v. NIH 2008 Pandemic Flu Readiness Plan - 508, 2008.
6. RESCISSION: Subcommittee on Research Safety Policy SRS-014. The rescission date of this Standard Operating Procedure is September 12, 2024.
7. FOLLOW-UP: Research Safety Coordinator/Chemical Hygiene Officer