Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
Clemson University

POLICY #03: INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE (IACUC)
POLICY ON PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OF ANIMALS

Purpose: The following policy has been developed to ensure compliance with the Animal Welfare Act and Public Health Service Policy, and to ensure humane use and care of vertebrate animals. The policy applies to the use of physical restraint of animals.

Physical restraint is the use of manual restraint or mechanical devices to limit some or all of an animal's normal movement or activities. Physical restraint is defined as either brief restraint (i.e., less than 5-15 minutes) for purposes such as examination of the animal, collection of samples and drug administration; or prolonged restraint (i.e., several hours or more for purposes such as frequent or continuous collection of samples, long-term administration of drugs, and/or planned interventions. Prolonged restraint includes use of devices, for example but not limited to, sling, chair or enclosure smaller than recommended in the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals or the Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching for the maintenance of that species. It is difficult to specify specifically what is meant by prolonged restraint in terms of time (> than 4 hours) because it depends on the type of restraint and the species, but professional judgment is utilized in evaluating this component.

1.1. All forms of restraint should be described in the animal use protocol. Restraint for brief periods for examination of the animal or experimental manipulation occurs in most research applications and usually does not require scientific justification.

1.2. Prolonged physical restraint should be avoided unless it is essential for achieving research objectives. The principal investigator must provide scientific justification for prolonged restraint.

1.3. Restraint devices should be suitable in size, design, and operation to minimize discomfort or injury to the animal. Less-restrictive systems that do not limit an animal's ability to make normal postural adjustments, such as stanchions for farm animals, should be used when compatible with research or teaching objectives.

1.4. The following are important guidelines for the Principal Investigator and IACUC to consider:

- Restraint devices are not 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.

- Animals to be placed in restraint devices should be given training to adapt to the equipment and personnel.

- Provision should be made for observation of the animal at appropriate intervals.

- The presence of lesions, illness, or behavioral changes may necessitate temporary or permanent removal of the animal from the restraint device and should be addressed by including appropriate humane endpoints in the animal use protocol.