

**Clemson University**  
**Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)**

**Policy Number: 3.5**

**Policy Title: Physical Restraint of Animals**

**Section 1: Purpose**

The following policy is intended to provide information to Principal Investigators regarding the physical restraint of animals.

**Section 2: Scope**

This policy applies to all vertebrate animals used for research, teaching, testing, or demonstration within or associated with the University.

**Section 3: Policy**

**Physical Restraint**

Physical restraint is the use of manual or mechanical means to limit some or all of an animal's normal movement for the purpose of examination, collection of samples, drug administration, therapy, or experimental manipulation. Physical restraint can be categorized as either:

- Brief restraint – Restraint generally lasting 15 minutes or less for activities such as examination, sample collection, or drug administration.
- Prolonged restraint – Restraint generally lasting longer than 15 minutes for activities such as serial sample collections, long-term drug administration, or planned interventions.

**Considerations for Physical Restraint**

- Alternatives to physical restraint should be considered.
- All forms of restraint should be described in the animal use protocol (AUP).
- The period of restraint should be the minimum required to accomplish objectives.
- Restraint devices should be suitable in size, design, and operation to minimize discomfort and/or injury to the animal.
- Restraint devices are not considered normal methods of housing.
- Restraint devices should not be used simply as a convenience in handling or managing animals.
- Animals to be placed in restraint devices should be provided training to adapt to the equipment and personnel.
- Provision should be made for observation of the animal at appropriate intervals.

**Prolonged Restraint**

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

- 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.
- 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.
- If an animal is not able to adapt to a restraint device with training and positive reinforcement, that animal should be removed from the study.
- 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 AUP. If clinical signs develop during or as a result of restraint, contact the Attending Veterinarian as soon as possible for care and guidance.