

**Washington State University**  
***Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee***

**Policy #4**

**“Animal Care Medical Records for Research and Teaching Animals”**

**Approval Date: 10/23/2019 (Replacing Version 9/2015)**

**A. Background Information**

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1. The Animal Welfare Act, *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* and the *Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching* require that appropriate experimental, breeding, and health records are maintained for animals used or produced for testing, teaching, or research.
2. Daily observations must be made of all animals to assess health and well-being. Personnel conducting observations need to be trained to recognize physical and behavioral health concerns.

**B. Record Requirements for all Animals**

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1. A daily record/entry of animal well-being for both normal and "abnormal" animals (e.g., post-surgical or ill animal(s)).
  - a. Exceptions to daily observation such as for hibernating or burrowing animals must be justified in an IACUC approved protocol or SOP.
2. Detailed documentation of experimental or teaching procedures performed, including drugs administered (dose, route, and frequency), samples collected, observation for possible sequelae, and method of euthanasia or final disposition. In addition, veterinary health records must be maintained for animals that have an abnormal health status or those receiving preventive veterinary care.
3. Records of observations, veterinary care, treatment, and experimental or teaching procedures must be readily accessible to the attending veterinarian or designee, as well as inspectors and site visitors from regulatory and oversight bodies (e.g., IACUC, OLAW, USDA, AAALAC).

**C. Documentation Required for Animals Showing Signs of Illness, Injury, or Other Departure from Normal Health Status Includes**

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1. Pertinent history
2. Examination findings
3. Tentative / provisional diagnosis
4. Diagnostic and treatment plan
5. Record of regular assessment of animal's condition and response to treatment at appropriate intervals as defined by the treating veterinarian, protocol or SOP
6. Record of veterinary care, including documentation of dosages, routes and frequency of any drugs/medications administered.
7. Records of diagnostic tests and results
8. Resolution of the problem (e.g., diagnosis, treatment, return to a normal state, euthanasia).
9. In some cases, a composite record may be used for a group of animals for preventative health treatments, experimental or teaching procedures, or post-operative monitoring. At minimum, such records should include: a list of the animal numbers/IDs, notation that each animal has been checked, documentation of any abnormal findings or occurrences, and a description of any therapeutics given including drugs, doses, and routes of administration.
10. Written entries made on the record must be signed or initialed by the author.
11. There should be documentation that veterinary oversight and authority is in place regarding veterinary care. For example, if there is a veterinary phone consult then the record should indicate the identity of the veterinarian, date of consult and any relevant information related to the consult. Please refer to IACUC [Policy #3](#).

**D. Location of Records**

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1. For animals maintained in a vivarium, treatment record(s) must be maintained in a manner that allows for immediate access (e.g., in or near the room where the animals are housed). This is especially important for post-operative animals or animals with anticipated abnormal observations. Easily accessible records allow ready communication between the research, veterinary and animal care staff.

2. For animals maintained in a farm, naturalistic or other outdoor environment, treatment records must be readily accessible from the facility or laboratory manager, PI, veterinarian or the Veterinary Teaching Hospital files.

#### **E. Additional Information**

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1. This policy does not require or recommend a standard form for animal care and medical records. Whatever the form, the record(s) should be readily available, easily readable, and should contain all pertinent clinical information to justify the tentative diagnosis and any treatment provided.
2. Additional information and examples of record templates are available from the Office of the Campus Veterinarian (335-6246).

#### **F. Resources**

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1. [USDA Animal Welfare Act](#)
2. Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. 2011. National Research Council.
3. Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 2010. Federation of Animal Science Societies.
4. [USDA Animal Welfare Act Inspection Guide](#)
5. [USDA Daily Observations guidance](#)
6. [USDA Animal Welfare Act Policy Statement \(#3\)](#) on veterinary care and health records, go to this web site
7. [Policy statement](#) by the American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine regarding adequate veterinary care