PURPOSE
A. To establish proper rabbit room maintenance and husbandry procedures to ensure quality care and prevent the development of disease.

HOUSING AND CARE
A. All efforts will be made to house rabbits in pairs.
   1. Rabbits may be singly housed if:
      a. There are veterinarian concerns regarding the well-being of the animals, such as incompatibility.
      b. Individual housing based on experimental needs is justified in the animal use protocol and approved by the IACUC.
      c. The need for single housing should be reviewed on a regular basis by the IACUC and veterinarian.

B. All forms located in the room’s notebook must be adequately filled out.
   1. Daily observation sheet
   2. Task sheets
   3. Temperature/humidity logs
      a. Temperature range: 61-72 degrees F
      b. Humidity range: 30-70%
   4. Enrichment log

C. Rooms should be checked daily for any operational deficiencies. Any deficiencies should be reported immediately to the facility manager.

D. Water bottles are refilled daily with fresh water.

E. Fresh food is added daily to the feeders, and discarded once a week and given all fresh food.

F. Enrichment will be provided according to the enrichment portion of this SOP.

G. The cage pan liners are changed Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

H. Rabbit banks, including pans, water bottles, feeders, and enrichment devices, are changed out once a week. The rabbit is safely removed from its cage and placed into a clean bank of cages with freshly lined pans.

CAGE SANITATION
A. Pan liners should be removed from the pans, placed in a trash bag and taken to the dumpster. The pans should be rinsed to remove gross debris, and then ran through the cage washer for cleaning and sanitation.

B. Using a power foamer, rabbit cages should be cleaned with PRL(Pharmacal Research Laboratories)- grease-free and then rinsed. Following cleaning, the
cages are sanitized with a 10% bleach solution, and allowed to sit for 10 minutes. Cages are then rinsed with water and allowed to dry.

**ANIMAL ROOM SANITATION**

A. Floors are swept daily and mopped with disinfectant mixed according to manufacturer’s recommendations on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

B. Weekly- All surfaces (including door frames, lights, and vents) are wiped down with disinfectant mixed according to manufacturer’s recommendations.

C. Monthly- Floors, walls, and ceiling should be disinfected according to manufacturer’s recommendations.

**RABBIT HANDLING**

A. Rabbits have very powerful hind legs, so great care should be taken to support them to prevent any injury to the rabbit.

B. Removal/Return to cage
   1. Grasp the scruff of the neck firmly with one hand
   2. Support the hindquarters firmly with the other hand

C. Transporting the rabbit
   1. Grasp the scruff of the neck firmly with one hand
   2. Place the rabbit’s head under your arm/elbow being careful not to impede breathing
   3. Support and control the rabbit’s hindquarters with the other hand

**ENRICHMENT**

A. For social enrichment:
   1. Human interaction with the rabbits during daily husbandry is encouraged.
   2. Animal care staff trims toenails and brush the rabbits monthly providing stimulating interaction.
   3. Cages will be arranged in a manner that allows the rabbits to visualize other rabbits in the room.

B. For physical enrichment:
   1. Balls, stainless steel hanging enrichment, and shelves are provided to the rabbits to help satisfy their need to play and reduce boredom.
   2. Alfalfa blocks are provided daily, and bunny chew blocks are provided weekly to help satisfy their need to chew.
   3. If available, fresh produce (such as kale, lettuce, celery, etc.) can be provided to the rabbits as additional enrichment.

**ENRICHMENT IMPLEMENTATION**

A. The facilities manager will implement an enrichment schedule based on the study and the enrichment devices available.

B. Enrichment will be provided to the rabbits by the technicians at change-out and various times throughout the week.
C. Technicians will log any enrichment provided to the rabbits in the enrichment log located in the room’s notebook.
D. Exceptions to this SOP require a statement in the animal use protocol providing adequate justification as to why environmental enrichment would interfere with the study.

ANIMAL HEALTH MONITORING
A. Animals are observed daily by animal care staff for any evidence of illness or change in behavior.
   1. Everyone with access to the animal facility is responsible for immediately informing the facility manager or university veterinarian when an animal becomes ill or a change in behavior is observed.
B. In the event of suspected illness:
   1. Record your observations in the rabbit’s individual record- include the date, the problem observed, and your initials
   2. Immediately contact the ACS facility manager or the university veterinarian:

      Carla Grisham: ACS facility manager
      806-834-3437 office
      254-913-5156 cell

      Tiffanie Brooks: ACS/ University veterinarian
      806-834-8588 office
      806-239-2120 cell