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PURPOSE

To prevent the spread of diseases from wild rodents to humans and laboratory animals.

BASIC PRECAUTIONS

- A. The Principal Investigator (PI) or Instructor is responsible for:
 1. Assuring that all personnel (student and faculty) are made aware of the particular health risks associated with the planned housing of wild-caught rodents.
 2. Assuring that all personnel are familiar with the common zoonotic diseases of wild rodents.
 3. Advising all personnel to seek medical consultation and baseline physical examinations if they have any personal concerns about health-related issues.
- B. All personnel coming into contact with wild-caught rodents being maintained in a Texas Tech University Animal Facility should be advised that inoculation against tetanus is recommended (if due) and that special care should be taken to avoid any ticks, chiggers, and other ectoparasites that wild-caught rodents may harbor while being housed in the Animal Facility. Under some circumstances (i.e., working with species known to harbor plague), personnel should be advised to use special caution and consider inoculation against plague when handling, processing or maintaining these animals in the Animal Facility.

TRAINING OF PERSONNEL

It is the PI's responsibility to insure that the faculty, students and technical personnel involved in projects that include wild caught rodents are provided training on human health risks associated with the project. This training should cover pathogens, species identification, the PI's field protocols, and symptoms of hantavirus and other potential infections directly related to the housing of these animals.

PREPARATION, EQUIPMENT AND TRANSPORTATION OF WILD-CAUGHT RODENTS TO THE ANIMAL HOLDING FACILITY

- A. Field Work
 1. All capturing and trapping of wild rodents must follow SOP027 Health Risks of Collecting, Handling and Processing of Wild Rodents.
- B. Animals and animal handling
 1. Personnel who collect rodents should be familiar with the species likely to be captured. If they are not (i.e., in the case of beginning students), their rodent traps should be checked in the company of trained personnel, who in turn can advise the student.



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2. Wild caught rodents must be processed by individuals with training, experience, and/or expertise (as selected by the PI or Instructor of Record). To process such specimens, individual(s) should wear protective hand covering and long sleeves and the processing should be conducted (if possible) in open air (airflow away from the processor) and in the sunlight.
 3. Trained individuals must perform the transfer of all wild-caught rodents from the trap to the transportation cages. Transfer from traps to micro-isolator (filter-top cages) should be done in an open-air environment.
 4. All wild-caught rodents that are to be transported to the Texas Tech University Animal Facility should be treated for external parasites when first placed in the micro-isolator cages (filter-top cages) after transfer from the traps. The Clinical Veterinarian should recommend/approve this treatment.
 5. Transportation of wild-caught rodents must be in bedded micro-isolator cages (filter-top cages) with a source of feed and water (potatoes/apples). The tops to these cages must be secured to prevent opening during transit.
 6. The vehicle transporting the wild-caught rodents must be temperature controlled.
- C. Texas Tech University Animal Facility Procedures for Handling Wild-Caught Rodents
1. The wild-caught rodents will be delivered to the loading dock of the Biology Building and micro-isolator cages (filter-top cages) will be transported to the 6th floor animal facility using the freight elevator.
 2. The outside of the transport cages will be disinfected with Clidox before entering the animal facility.
 3. A room will be designated to house wild-caught rodents. The rodents will be transferred to ventilated cages under a biological safety hood and housed in the ventilated rack.
 4. Animal Care Services personnel are responsible for maintaining these wild-caught rodents while they are being housed in this facility.
 5. Personnel accessing or handling wild-caught animals should comply with the following:
 - a. Be enrolled in the Texas Tech University Occupational Health and Safety Program.
 - b. Wear required personal, protective clothing, which includes protective hand covering, lab coat and mask
 - c. Filter-tops must only be removed when in a biological safety hood.
 - d. All processing/manipulation of wild caught rodents should be performed under a biological safety hood.
 6. Animal Care Services personnel will be responsible for the maintenance and daily care of the animals and the room using SOPACS051 "BSLII Rodent Husbandry". The following additional procedures will be used:



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- a. Personal, protective clothing is required, which includes protective hand covering, lab jackets and Mask.
- b. The filtered-tops must only be removed when in a biological safety cabinet.
- c. The process for changing cages will be following procedures in SOP035 "BSLII Rodent Husbandry".
- d. The room will be wet-mopped as needed; no brooms or vacuums will be allowed in this room.
- e. When all animals are removed from the room, follow SOP042 "Decontamination of Animal Rooms and Procedural Areas".

IV. OTHER PROCEDURES

- A. Workers who develop a febrile or respiratory illness within 45 days of the last potential exposure should immediately seek medical attention and inform their physician of the potential occupational risk for the hantavirus infection and possible zoonoses.
- B. Personnel utilizing a fitted respirator must have a physical examination, pass a pulmonary function test and have their respirator fit-tested. Call the Environmental Health and Safety Department at 742-3876 for details.
- C. Protective hand covering should be washed and disinfected before removing them. Suitable disinfectants include Clidox, Quatricide, or EPA approved hospital grade disinfectant and used according to the manufacture's instructions.
- D. Cages and traps contaminated by rodent urine or feces in which a rodent was maintained should be disinfected with a commercial disinfectant or bleach solution.
- E. When removing organs, obtaining blood samples or processing wild caught rodents, these guidelines should be followed:
 1. Working with tissue or blood should be done in a Biological Safety Cabinet.
 2. Follow SOP031 Biological Safety Cabinets

V. HEALTH CARE

Everyone with access to the animal facility is responsible for informing the Clinical Veterinarian when an animal becomes ill or a change in behavior is noted. Seriously ill animals should be reported IMMEDIATELY to the veterinarian. When an investigator, technician, or animal care personnel requires veterinary assistance, they should:

- A. Complete the "Animal Observation Report" in the Notebook. Indicate the date, room number, animal number/cage ID, and problem observed, and ensure that the name (or initials) of the person making the report is recorded.



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B. Contact an ACS Veterinarian or the ACS Facility Manager at:

ACS Attending Veterinarian
806-834-8588 Office
806-239-2120 Cell Phone

ACS Clinical Veterinarian
806-834-7373 Office
660-562-4425 Cell Phone

ACS Facilities Manager
806-834-2872 Office
602-758-0670 Cell Phone

C. Provide all the above information to the individual contacted above, who will give advice and authorization for the action(s) that should be taken.