Research Animal Compliance Tips

Here are a few tips for keeping your lab in compliance with the rules, regulations, policies and guidelines governing animal research at UW-Madison.

1. Check your drugs, medical materials, and fluids for their expiration dates MONTHLY. Check at the end of the month, before they are about to expire. In addition, use the expired material color code system (the "colored dot" system), which can help you to identify expiration dates at a glance. Email the RARC pharmacy at pharmacy@rarc.wisc.edu or vetstaff@mailplus.wisc.edu for free colored stickers and key codes.

2. Make sure everyone who is going to work with animals is listed on the approved protocol and has completed the required training. Remember- this must happen **before** a person starts working with animals.

3. Know your protocol: if your protocol states you will give medications to animals or observe them on a specific schedule, you must do it and document it.
   a. Example: Protocol says animals will be checked twice daily after surgery for three days. Inspectors or compliance personnel expect to see documentation of these twice-daily checks for three days after surgery. This includes weekends and holidays.
   b. Example: if your protocol states you will give an analgesic once daily for three days after a procedure, you must do it and document it. Documentation can be written in a lab notebook, surgery/postop record, or cage card.

4. You must euthanize animals when they reach the specific endpoints listed in your protocol or when directed by an RARC veterinarian. If animals are showing specific clinical signs, reach a specific weight or body condition score, or other measures of pain or distress listed in your protocol, they must be euthanized immediately.

5. Report unexpected animal illness or injury to RARC veterinary staff and report adverse events to your ACUC. Reporting these events helps our institution improve monitoring for broad problematic trends that could pose a risk to animal or colony health and research integrity.

The bottom line for compliance: follow your approved IACUC protocol.

Questions? Contact the RARC Assessment Specialists at apas@rarc.wisc.edu

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