Title: Procedure for Handling Animals Found Dead and Morbidly Sick Animals

Scope: All authorized personnel

Responsibility: Facility Managers, Animal Care Staff, RARC Veterinary Technicians, Investigative Staff

Purpose: To ensure that appropriate Comparative Path. lab personnel are notified of morbidly sick animals and mortality losses and that the cadavers are properly handled when delivered to the lab.

The following procedures are to be used in all UW facilities, however, the facility itself may have procedures that override, replace or modify these instructions. Please see your clinical veterinarian in case of conflict.

Hours of Operation:
1. Submissions are accepted at Room 389 Enzyme Institute between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. on regular work days Monday through Friday.
2. Any submissions outside of those hours need to be arranged by calling the lab at 263-6464 or the Lab Director at 262-1239. After hours, please consult the veterinarian on call.

Small Animal Procedures:
1. When a dead animal is discovered in a cage or room, the carcass should be placed in a leakproof plastic bag (not a glove) and the bag sealed. Animals in Biolevel 2 and above housing should be handled according to their protocol. Cage cards that will be sent with the animal should be put in a second bag and not with the sealed animal. **Do not put cage cards in the same bag with the animal.**
2. Morbidly sick animals should be submitted in cages or appropriate transport containers.
3. A card or masking tape can be taped to the bag with the written information on the animal. Included should be:
   a. Room number
   b. Cage number and animal I.D. number
   c. P.I. Name.
   d. Date found dead
   e. Exposure to biohazardous agents, if any.
4. Fill out an "Animal Found Dead" (of either RARC origin or one generated by your own facility) and place it on the cage.
5. Contact the PI or lab contact person to let them know an animal was found
dead in the cage.
6. Place the bagged and labeled animal(s) in the designated dead animal refrigerator and document on the mortality log that is affixed to the refrigerator. **Do Not put dead animals in a freezer before submitting them for necropsy.**
7. Notify Clinical Veterinary Staff of morbidly sick animals. Unless the veterinarian feels that it would be inhumane not to euthanize the animal, please submit animals alive to RARC for necropsy. Pathologists usually prefer to euthanize small animals themselves. Large animals will require consultation of the clinical veterinarian and the pathologist to decide when to euthanize. Primates must be submitted dead or euthanized prior to submission.
8. Animals for necropsy are submitted to the RARC Comparative Pathology Lab (CPL) for necropsy. Dead animals and morbidly sick animals need to be submitted in a timely manner. Fresh dead and morbidly sick animals will yield the best information. After death, tissue degradation is rapid and makes it extremely difficult to obtain usable information from necropsy.
   a. Call the RARC pathology lab at 263-6464 and speak with a necropsy technician to arrange for drop off or possible pick up of dead animals.
   b. Fill out the RARC CPL accession forms. These forms must accompany the animals/specimens to RARC CPL pathology lab. Submission forms can be found at [http://www.rarc.wisc.edu/forms/index.html](http://www.rarc.wisc.edu/forms/index.html)
   c. The responsibility of transporting dead animals to RARC is shared by laboratory personnel and animal care staff.

*If there is a question as to whether the animals should be necropsied, please consult your facility veterinary staff and/or the CPL pathology staff.*

**Large Animal Procedures:**

1. Large Animals are necropsied either at the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Lab or the School of Veterinary Medicine. Arrangements for transport of large animals are to be made in conjunction with the RARC Comp. Path. Lab (CPL), your facility manager and veterinary staff.
2. Call the R.A.R.C at 263-6464 to notify the pathology lab staff of the need for a large animal necropsy and to determine where the animal is to be taken.
3. Submission forms are to be filled out and placed in the plastic sleeves designed for this use. These sleeves can be obtained from the RARC Comp. Path. Lab (CPL) or your clinical veterinarian. The sleeves are tied onto the leg of the animals and accompany it to the necropsy facility. Please FAX or email the forms to the lab as well prior to the necropsy.

**Weekend Procedures:** The RARC Pathology lab is closed on weekends and holidays, however, there is always a pathologist on-call. If you have found a dead animal please see the following instructions:

1. If you find a dead or moribund animal on a weekend or holiday you should call the paging center and leave a message for the Veterinarian on call (262-2122).
2. If the Veterinarian determines that a necropsy needs to be done on a weekend, he or she will call the pathologist on call.
3. If an immediate necropsy is not requested, place dead animals in the refrigerator and
contact the weekend supervisor via either phone, email or handwritten note on their desk. Inform them that there has been a dead animal found and on what day it was found. It is the supervisor's responsibility to inform the clinical veterinarian and assure transport of the dead animal to RARC on the next working day.

4. Telephone the pathology tech (263-6464) and leave a message that you have a dead animal (identify the species) arriving on the next working day.

Biohazard Procedures:
Refer to door card information on animal room and consult Principle Investigator or Attending Veterinarian. Be sure to include any and ALL biohazard info on the submission form and send it along with the necropsy submission!

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