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# UM PROGRAM

## FOR DAILY ANIMAL HEALTH CHECK -- NON-MAMMALS

According to the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*, all animals should be observed daily for signs of illness, injury, or abnormal behavior by a person trained to recognize such signs. Unexpected deaths and signs of illness, distress, or other deviations from normal in animals should be reported promptly to ensure appropriate and timely delivery of veterinary medical care. Adherence to this recommendation is critical to the maintenance of good health for both individual animals and animal colonies.

In compliance with this recommendation, the University Committee on Use and Care of Animals (UCUCA) requires that all vertebrate animals maintained by the University for use in research, testing, or instruction, and their immediate housing environments, be checked **daily** for abnormal and/or deleterious conditions. Descriptions of the animal health and environment checks follow.

**Animal Health Check.** Manipulate enclosures as necessary to observe appearance and behavior of animals. Examples of conditions which may be observed and should be reported include:

### **General**

- excessive weight loss/emaciation or weight gain/obesity
- unusual growths or swellings
- unusual posture, activity, lethargy
- skin irritation, lacerations, lesions, or ulcers
- bleeding or discharge from an orifice
- unusual feces
- difficulty breathing
- unusual locomotion
- convulsions/seizures

### **Fish**

- fungus
- loss of equilibrium
- protruding eyes
- hematoma
- fin rot
- scale shedding

### **Amphibians**

- dehydration (sunken eyes, loss of skin elasticity) (terrestrial)
- skin discoloration
- edema/bloat
- skin shedding

### **Reptiles**

- dehydration (sunken eyes, loss of skin elasticity)
- abnormal skin shedding
- eyelid swelling
- vomiting

### **Birds**

- excessive preening
- ruffled feathers or excessive feather loss
- hematoma
- abnormal vocalization
- overgrown beak

**Environment Check.** Primary (cage/tank) and secondary (room) enclosures should be evaluated for the following:

### **General**

- temperature extremes
- inadequate supply of food, water, or applicable nutrients
- decreased food, water, or nutrient consumption
- lack of feces or urine
- broken enclosure
- excessively soiled enclosure
- unusual odors
- humidity extremes
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### **Fish**

- water level
- water condition/quality
- water oxygenation
- organism accumulation
- water filtration
- water temperature

### **Amphibians**

- water quality
- mucus
- desquamated skin
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### **Reptiles**

- photoperiod abnormalities
- external heat source
- water temperature (aquatic)
- basking area

### **Birds**

- inadequate ventilation (stuffy, excessive odor)
- excess ventilation (drafty)

Signs of illness, injury, or other abnormal conditions should be reported immediately to the facility supervisor and, as appropriate, to the Unit for Laboratory Animal Medicine (ULAM) veterinary technical staff. The ULAM veterinary staff is charged with the responsibility for delivery of timely veterinary medical care. Deleterious environmental conditions should be resolved as soon as possible by correction of the condition or relocation of the animals.

Daily animal health and environment checks are the responsibility of animal care personnel, and must be recorded on the animal housing room activity log. Failure to perform and record these checks, or failure to report deleterious animal health or environmental conditions for treatment or correction, could result in withdrawal of UCUCA approval to house animals. Similarly, animal use personnel are responsible for observation and evaluation of animal well-being during experimental manipulations, and must report any deleterious animal health or environmental conditions to appropriate animal care or veterinary personnel promptly. Failure to do so could result in withdrawal of UCUCA approval to use animals.

Related Documents:

- U-M Program for the Documentation of Animal Husbandry Activities Utilizing an Animal Housing Room Activity Log