

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
South Texas Veterans Health Care System
7400 Merton Minter Boulevard
San Antonio, Texas 78284

RESEARCH SERVICE
MEMORANDUM 06-16

September 8, 2006

ANIMAL CARE AND USE PROGRAM

Euthanasia

1. PURPOSE: To establish policy and procedures for the euthanasia of laboratory animals.
- 2.. POLICY: At the conclusion of the experiments, animals shall be euthanitized in an approved manner unless continuation of life of animal is necessary to determine results of experiments or animal is to be used in related approved research.
3. PROCEDURES:
 - a. Methods used: All investigators will be provided a comprehensive list of acceptable methods of euthanasia (2000 Report of the AVMA Panel on Euthanasia). Although there may be several acceptable methods of each species, investigators are encouraged to use the method of choice. Any deviation from acceptable methods must be prefaced with written scientific justification. Options include CO₂, barbiturate overdose (IV and IP), exsanguination and K Cl (IV) in anesthetized animals, decapitation and cervical dislocation in small sedated or anesthetized animals or with justification in small unanesthetized animals, and stunning in small animals.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Method of Choice</u>
Animals <125 gm	co ₂ , Barbiturate overdose, decapitation
Rabbits/Rodents >125 gm <1 kg	co ₂ , Barbiturate overdose, decapitation
Rabbits/Rodents >1 kg but <5 kg	Barbiturate overdose (IV)
Neonatal rodents (up to 14 days)	As resistant to co ₂ , alternative methods are recommended. Co ₂ may be used if followed by another method (e.g., decapitation)

- b. Training and experience: VMU personnel, research investigators, technicians carrying out euthanasia must have training and experience in the method used. VMU technicians will be provided extensive on-the-job training by the VMU supervisor. Principal investigators are responsible for training for their technicians. The VMU supervisor will periodically monitor personnel to insure use of appropriate technique.
4. RESPONSIBILITY: Investigators will be responsible for compliance with animal guidelines.
5. REFERENCES: NIH "Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals," The Animal Welfare Act of 1976, 2000 Report of the AVMA Panel on Euthanasia, NIH Clarification regarding use of carbon dioxide for Euthanasia of Small Laboratory Animals, 7/17/02; Guidelines for Euthanasia of Mouse and Rat Fetuses and Neonates, NIH Animal Research Committee, 2001.
6. RESCISSION: Research Service memorandum 03-16, dated November 17, 2003.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Melby". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

PETER MELBY, M.D.
ACOS for Research and Development

Attachment
Carbon Dioxide Chamber Instructions

DISTRIBUTION: Veterinary Medical Unit; Investigators

USE OF CARBON DIOXIDE CHAMBER

1. The euthanasia chamber should allow ready visibility of the animals. Do not overcrowd the chamber – all animals in the chamber must be able to make normal postural adjustments.
2. Compressed co₂ gas in cylinders is the only recommended source of carbon dioxide as it allows the inflow of gas to the induction chamber to be controlled. Without pre-charging the chamber, place the animal(s) in the chamber and introduce 100% carbon dioxide at the rate of 10-20% of the chamber volume per minute so as to optimize reduction in distress. (For a 10-liter volume chamber, use a flow rate of approximately 1-2 liter(s) per minute.) After the animals become unconscious, the flow rate can be increased to minimize the time of death. Sudden exposure of conscious animals to carbon dioxide concentrations of 70% or greater causes distress.
3. Animals should be left in container until clinical death is ensured (10 minutes)
4. If an animal is not dead following co₂ exposure, another method of euthanasia (e.g., decapitation, see 2000 Report of the AVMA Panel on euthanasia) must be added while the animal is under co₂ narcosis to assure death.