SOCIALIZATION AND EXERCISE FOR DOGS IN RESEARCH FACILITIES

1. PURPOSE

1.1. The purpose of this Animal Care and Use Procedure (ACUP) is to describe socialization and exercise given to dogs (over 12 weeks of age, except bitches with litters). This ACUP is approved by the Cornell Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Any deviation must be approved by the IACUC prior to its application.

2. SCOPE

2.1. This ACUP is intended for animal care staff and investigators handling and caring for dogs at Cornell University.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1. Canine socialization and exercise provides dogs with the opportunity to fulfill and express normal behavioral needs typical to the species. Contact the Center for Animal Resources and Education (CARE) at Cornell University veterinary staff by emailing care@cornell.edu if you have any questions.

4. MATERIAL AND EQUIPMENT

4.1. None

5. PROCEDURE

5.1. Exercise Program Overview

5.1.1. When consistent with research protocols and dogs’ health and well-being, dogs are housed in compatible groups, or housed individually in enclosures that provide at least two times the Animal Welfare Regulations (AWR) required floor space (See references 8.4 and 8.5).
5.2. Single Housed Dogs

5.2.1. Single housed dogs must have sensory connection with other dogs (visual, olfactory, auditory) and meet AWR floor space requirements.

5.2.2. If housed in floor space two times greater than AWR requirements, exercise the dogs per facility SOPs.

5.3. Group Housed Dogs

5.3.1. House dogs in compatible groups.

5.3.2. Observe group released dogs frequently during exercise to ensure their safety; keep the composition of the group as stable as possible (i.e., the members of the group should be the same each time).

5.3.3. Do not release females in heat with intact males.

5.4. Isolation Housed Dogs (i.e., no sensory contact with other dogs)

5.4.1. If a dog is housed without sensory contact with other dogs, provide positive human contact at least daily.

**NOTE:** Time spent on cage cleaning or other husbandry activities does not fulfill the human contact requirement for isolated dogs.

5.4.1.1. Examples of positive human contact include: stroking, grooming, or similar physical contact within / outside the cage.

5.4.1.2. Methods for low stress socialization of apprehensive dogs include:

5.4.1.2.1. Sitting passively with the dog while avoiding eye contact and allowing the dog to approach at will.

5.4.1.2.2. If the dog is receptive to physical contact, gradually increasing contact is appropriate.

5.5. Record Keeping Requirements

5.5.1. Document the type and duration of socialization and exercise that each animal receives in the animal record according to ACUP 542 Maintaining Health and Procedure Records for Research and Teaching Animals.

5.6. Exemptions

5.6.1. The following are valid exemptions from social housing, exercise recommendations, or additional human contact.

5.6.1.1. It will adversely affect the health or well-being of the dogs, as determined by the Attending Veterinarian (AV).

5.6.1.2. The dog exhibits aggressive or vicious behavior.

5.6.1.3. The investigator has scientific justification for the exemption as stated in the IACUC approved protocol (ensure that the IACUC has reviewed and approved the exemptions before they are instituted).
5.6.2. Review exemptions on a regular basis as follows:

5.6.2.1. Exemptions are reviewed semi-annually by IACUC.
5.6.2.2. Temporary exemptions (those listed in 5.6.1.1 and 5.6.1.2 above) are reviewed every 30 days by the attending veterinarian.

5.6.3. Permanent conditions relating to the health and well-being of a given dog are assessed by a veterinarian and DO NOT require periodic review.

5.6.4. For further details, see IACUC Policy 550 Social Housing of Animals.

6. PERSONNEL SAFETY

6.1. Medical Emergencies: CALL 911.
6.2. When working with animals wear appropriate PPE, observe proper hygiene, and be aware of allergy, zoonosis, and injury risks. Refer to the CARE Occupational Health and Safety webpage for more information.

7. ANIMAL RELATED CONTINGENCIES

7.1. Post contact information for emergency assistance in a conspicuous location within the animal facility.
7.2. Emergency veterinary care is available at all times including after working hours and on weekends and holidays by calling the CARE pager (1-800-349-2456).
7.3. Non-emergency veterinary questions and requests for care, email CARE veterinary staff at care@cornell.edu.

8. REFERENCES

8.1. CARE Occupational Health and Safety webpage:
http://ras.research.cornell.edu/care/OHS.html
8.2. ACUP 542 Maintaining Health and Procedure Records for Research and Teaching Animals:
http://ras.research.cornell.edu/care/documents_k/ACUPs/ACUP542.pdf
8.3. ACUP 707 Animal Related Injury:
http://ras.research.cornell.edu/care/documents_k/ACUPs/ACUP707.pdf
8.4. Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 8th edition, Institute for Laboratory Animal Research, Washington, DC, 2011:
http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=12910&page=1
8.6. IACUC Policy 550 Social Housing of Animals:

9. APPENDIX

9.1. None
10. HISTORY

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