REPORTING SICK ANIMALS

1. PURPOSE

1.1. The purpose of this Animal Care and Use Procedure (ACUP) is to describe the process for reporting illness or injury in animals used for teaching and research at Cornell University. 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 use by managers, animal care technicians, and personnel within the Center for Animal Resources and Education (CARE) at Cornell University.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1. CARE routinely provides veterinary care for animals used at Cornell. For information on veterinary care provided by a non-CARE veterinarian, refer to IACUC Policy 500 Primary Clinical Veterinary Care Performed by Non-CARE Veterinarians. Emergency veterinary contact information is posted in all animal facilities.

3.2. Contact CARE at care@cornell.edu for more information or for assistance.

4. MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

4.1. Communication:

4.1.1. CARE on-call pager contact number (1-800-349-2456)
4.1.2. Emergency contact information

4.2. Medical Records:

4.2.1. Daily animal observation record sheets
4.2.2. Animal illness / injury reports
4.2.3. Orange sick cards (or other identification method)
4.2.4. Green treatment cards and / or treatment sheets
5. PROCEDURE

5.1. Facility Manager's Responsibilities:

5.1.1. Ensure all animal care personnel have undergone appropriate training to recognize sick animals before allowing any staff to perform unsupervised animal care.

5.1.2. Assign staff schedule to ensure that all animals will be observed at least once daily, including all weekends and holidays.

5.1.3. Provide record sheets to document daily animal checks by animal care personnel.

5.1.4. Post veterinary, principal investigator (PI), research personnel contact and emergency numbers in a conspicuous location, preferably near a phone.

5.1.5. Post the CARE on-call pager number in a conspicuous location.

5.2. Animal Care Personnel Responsibilities:

5.2.1. Observe each animal daily, including all weekends and holidays, for signs of illness or injury.

5.2.2. If unsure of the status of the animal, always treat the case as requiring immediate attention. For cases requiring immediate attention, proceed as follows:

5.2.2.1. Refer to Facility Emergency Contact sheet for sick or injured animals.

5.2.2.2. For veterinary care in a Biomedical Facility setting:

5.2.2.2.1. Contact a CARE veterinarian or technician directly.

5.2.2.2.1.1. In cases that require immediate attention (e.g., dystocia, labored breathing, or active bleeding are observed), do not just leave a voicemail message. If you are not able to reach someone directly, page the CARE group (1-800-349-2456); this number is listed on the CARE on-call sheet posted in all animal facilities.

5.2.2.2.1.2. Ask for the CARE group and give your name, the facility name, the call back phone number, and the nature of the concern. Make sure to include the word “urgent” in the message.

5.2.2.2.1.3. Remain accessible at the call back phone number for 15 minutes. If there is no response to the page within 15 minutes, send another group page.

5.2.2.2.2. Describe the nature and the urgency of the health concern to the CARE member.

5.2.2.2.3. State the location of the animal, the name of the researcher, and the name of the person reporting the concern.

5.2.2.2.4. Isolate the animal if necessary / possible.
5.2.2.2.5. Flag the animal’s cage with an orange Sick Animal Card (or make sure the animal is obviously identified) and fill in the illness / injury report.

5.2.2.2.6. Perform any prescribed treatments and follow-up as instructed by CARE.

5.2.2.2.7. Notify CARE if the animal gets worse or does not improve.

5.2.2.3. For veterinary care in a Farm Animal setting:

5.2.2.3.1. Contact Ambulatory and Production Medicine Veterinary Service at (607) 253-3140.

5.3. CARE Responsibilities

5.3.1. Respond to all pages, email, and telephone messages regarding animal health concerns in a timely manner.

5.3.2. Immediately attend to all communication stated as “urgent”.

5.3.3. Identify and examine the animal that was reported sick or injured, assess the need for treatment, and consider a plan to manage the case.

5.3.4. Contact the PI to discuss the proposed treatment or management plan. Obtain authorization from the PI to proceed with the proposed plan or consult with the PI to formulate an alternative plan.

5.3.5. Treat the animal as the specific health concern(s), veterinary consultation, and PI communication dictates.

5.3.6. Fill out the appropriate medical records as outlined in ACUP 542 Maintaining Health and Procedure Records for Research and Teaching Animals.

5.3.7. If treatment is necessary, place a green treatment card on cage and/or fill out a treatment sheet (depending on species) with specific instructions listing the nature and duration of the treatment and who will be responsible for performing it (i.e., clinical staff, CARE / husbandry staff, study-related staff, or the PI / lab students).

5.3.8. Arrange for a follow-up evaluation and perform follow-up assessments and care until the case is resolved.

5.3.9. Document the dates and details of all observations and interventions throughout the case including the case resolution date.

5.3.10. File records of closed cases in the appropriate location for each facility.

NOTE: In general, health records must be kept for 3 years. Refer to USDA and PHS policy for specifics.

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, on weekends and holidays:

7.2.1. Biomedical Settings: CARE (pager 1-800-349-2456)
7.2.2. Farm Animal Settings: Ambulatory and Production Medicine Service at (607) 253-3140

7.3. Non-emergency veterinary questions and requests for care, email CARE veterinary staff at care@cornell.edu.

8. REFERENCES

8.1. ACUP 542 Maintaining Health and Procedure Records for Research and Teaching Animals:
http://ras.research.cornell.edu/CARE/documents_k/ACUPs/ACUP542.pdf

8.2. IACUC Policy 500 Primary Clinical Veterinary Care Performed by Non-CARE Veterinarians:

8.3. CARE Occupational Health and Safety webpage:
http://www.research.cornell.edu/care/OHS.html

9. APPENDIX

9.1. None

10. HISTORY

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