ACCLIMATION / STABILIZATION
OF ANIMALS

PERFORMANCE STANDARD: To provide physiologically stable biologic models for research.

REFERENCES:
1. United States Department of Agriculture, 9 CFR Parts 1, 2, and 3.
2. PHS Policy on the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, OPRR, 1996.
3. OLAW Web Site: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/
4. AAALAC Accreditation Guidelines: http://www.aaalac.org
5. 8th Edition: The Guide for the Care & Use of Laboratory Animals

BACKGROUND: The “Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 8th Edition”, states: “…newly received animals should be given a period for physiologic, psychological, and nutritional acclimation before their use.” Transportation and ‘new surroundings’ have been documented to affect normal physiology and function of animals. Acclimation / stabilization are important components of animal welfare, animal wellbeing, and stable research outcomes. Acclimation / stabilization decreases animal distress and enhances physiologic stability and animal well-being. Appropriate acclimation periods may vary based on type and duration of animal transportation, the species, and the intended use of the animal.

ROLES & APPLICABILITY:
1. Research and DLAR staff will abide by the policy statements below, unless prior IACUC approval of an exception to this policy is documented within the protocol or SOP.
2. Medical concerns or emergencies, as determined by the DLAR veterinary staff, may exempt an animal from the acclimation period.

DEFINITION:
1. Transportation: to carry, move, or convey from one place to another by air, ground, or water.
2. Acclimation/Stabilization: physiological adjustment by an animal to environmental change that allow the animal to tolerate (or acclimatize to) the new environmental conditions and remain in this stable plane of homeostasis for an extended period.
POLICY:

1. Unless otherwise approved by the IACUC, all animals that are newly received via transport into a Duke-managed or Duke-operated facility require a minimum of 48 hours to acclimate before experimental use.

2. Transportation between different Duke-managed or Duke-operated facilities may also contribute stressors to the animal(s), but a formal acclimatization period is not required. However, researchers should consider the impact of intra-campus transport upon research outcomes.

3. Newly received animals under acclimation / stabilization should be housed in micro-isolator cages or physically separated from existing cages to prevent their contact with animals already on study. Biocontainment / bioexclusion shall be exercised as appropriate for the protection of the animals in acclimation / stabilization, for other colony animals, and for persons working with those animals.

4. Animals under acclimation / stabilization should be considered 'infected' unless adequate information confirms the disease-free nature of the animals.

5. Exceptions to allow an acclimation / stabilization period less than 48-hours:
   a. Animals must be euthanized the day of arrival, within 12 hours
   OR
   b. Requires justification and exemption approval by the IACUC.

6. The completion of the 48-hr acclimation period is not a replacement for the quarantine period, although the acclimation and quarantine periods may run concurrently. Quarantine periods and conditions are defined by the DLAR.