

SEPTEMBER 2014

RODENT ENRICHMENT AND SOCIAL HOUSING



New Fall 2014: Social housing and the provision of environmental enrichment practices are considered the default for housing laboratory animals in a research setting. The Animal Resource Management developed a “sticker” system to easily identify research animals who may be individually housed due to:

1. Single pregnant female prior to birth of pups or male breeder animal (green dot)
2. Aggressive animal removed from cage (red dot)
3. Last animal left from a cohort or only animal of a gender weaned from a litter (blue dot)



These three stickers are available in the animal housing rooms. Please place the appropriate sticker on your animal's cage. The conditions described (above) DO NOT have to be described in the UCAR Protocol.

Exemptions to the Policy such as animals housed alone due to experimental reasons; animals that cannot receive standard enrichment or individual animals that cannot receive enhanced enrichment (more than nestlets including little houses) must be justified in the UCAR protocol. Investigators and their staff should request the “SOLO and NO ENRICH” stickers from UCAR by submitting a Special Request form or by email (ucar@urmc.rochester.edu). Once a request for these two stickers have been received, UCAR will verify that exemptions to social housing and enrichment are reviewed and approved by UCAR.



The Online Animal Ordering form has been updated as well so that you can provide information about exemptions to the Animal Resource Enrichment Plan. As in the past, you also indicate if animals are housed one per cage. All exemptions to enrichment and individually housing of animals will be verified and if not described you will be asked to modify your protocol. Going forward, exemptions to social housing and enrichment will be printed on the animal's cage card for all new animals orders.

To assess where we are with individual housing and enrichment, starting November 1, 2014, the animal care technicians will submit an Animal Observation form indicating that animals are housed alone or do not have enrichment. The DLAM Animal Behaviorist and/or UCAR will follow up with the investigator regarding the situation and if indicated UCAR will request a Modification to update the protocol for individual housing or no enrichment. This information should be placed in the non standard housing section of the UCAR protocol.

As we adjust to the new system, please contact UCAR or a DLAM veterinarian with your questions. We have received many great questions. The Rodent Enrichment Policy is posted on the UCAR website (<http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/ucar/policies.aspx>). As always we appreciate your care and dedication to great science and the humane care and use of our research animals.



Website: <http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/ucar.aspx>
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