

RESEARCHERS' GUIDE TO REGULATIONS: Animals in Field Work

All University of Toronto researchers, research staff, and volunteers performing field studies involving live animals are under the authority of a University Local Animal Care Committee (LACC). The LACC ensures that the regulations set forth by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAF) and the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) are adhered to by all research staff members. A summary of the key guidelines pertaining to research with wildlife is referenced below (from the CCAC's, "Guidelines on: The Care and Use of Wildlife," 2003, <http://www.ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/Wildlife.pdf>).

General Responsibilities

- Investigators are responsible for their conduct and safety as well as that of all personnel involved in their studies. They are responsible for ensuring that hazards and risks involved with the field work are identified and that proper training is provided for all aspects of the study.
- Protocols should be designed to ensure the least amount of stress and disturbance to the animals and their habitat, as well as minimizing the chances of animal injury, morbidity and mortality.
- An emergency plan should be in place for any possible accidents and any exposures, and suspected exposures to infectious biological agents must be reported immediately to the nearest medical authorities.
- Investigators are responsible for ensuring that they have the necessary permits and approvals in place prior to starting the field work (e.g. Local or Federal permits/approvals for trapping, sampling, or the use of any chemicals/drugs etc. required for their work).

Training Requirements

- Anyone who will interact with research animals in the field must receive both research ethics and hands-on training (including restraint/capture, anesthesia and procedural training) and demonstrate competence prior to starting their work.
- Surgical procedures should only be performed by a veterinarian or under a veterinarian's supervision. All animals must be properly monitored while under anesthetic and appropriate records must be kept each time anesthesia is performed.

Procedural Requirements

- Conditions in the field can change rapidly and all personnel must be prepared to deal with any situation that may cause undue stress or injury to the animal. They must also be prepared to euthanize any animal that is suffering unrelievable pain and/or distress as a result of handling/capture or procedures performed. Any morbidity that is observed must be addressed, documented and investigated to determine the cause and avoid recurrence in the future.
- Euthanasia methods should be species-specific and humane, and specific training on euthanasia administration should be obtained prior to starting work.
- If traps or nets are used to capture animals, they should be checked frequently to avoid injury or death of captured animals. Weather conditions (e.g. extreme heat or cold) must also be considered.
- When animals are captured and kept (short or long-term), appropriate supportive care, housing, and monitoring must be provided. For long-term housing, the behavioural, physical and nutritional needs of the species must be considered as well as provision of some form of enrichment for both physical and psychological stimulation.
- When transporting animals, personnel must ensure that the care, caging and mode of transportation is suitable for the species and that the method chosen minimizes the stress and avoids injury of the animals. Any local and/or federal regulations for transporting animals must also be followed.
- Appropriate analgesics must be used when any procedure is performed that may cause intra-operative or post-operative pain.
- Adequate steps must be taken to ensure that drugs used on wildlife do not enter the food chain.

Additional Resources

- All research staff should be familiar with and ensure compliance with the relevant sections of the following University Frameworks and Guidelines that pertain to field work:
 - *Guidelines on Safety in Field Research* [Office of Environmental Health and Safety]
 - *Framework on Off Campus Safety* [Governing Council]
 - *Guidelines on Off-Campus Activities Undertaken by Campus Organizations* [Office of the Vice-Provost, Students]
 - *Guidelines on Safety Abroad* [Safety Abroad Office]
- Any questions or request for clarification about these regulations may be directed to the University Regulatory Veterinarian, Dr. David Hanwell (416) 978-6423 or david.hanwell@utoronto.ca.