

Hello UNT Animal Researchers,

To prepare for the possibility of campus closings in response to COVID-19, the UNT IACUC would like to remind Investigators and Supervisors that minimal animal care staff are considered essential personnel to be able to provide continuity of basic care for research animals on campus. Each lab should refer to their Emergency/Disaster plan procedures which should have essential employees designated and should communicate with the UNT IACUC Attending Veterinarian, Egeenee Daniels should the level of care for research animals be compromised at any time. Please contact us at untiacuc@unt.edu should you have any questions or concerns.

Things to keep in mind when writing an *Emergency and Disaster Plan* for animal research labs at UNT:

- I. The University of North Texas Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee is responsible for ensuring that appropriate measures are put in place to provide a plan for humane handling, treatment, transportation, housing and care of animals during a disaster or emergency in cooperation with the UNT Emergency Management Plan. Each laboratory housing animals should have an emergency response plan in place. Plans and procedures should ensure and address the following:
 - A. Personnel safety, health, and welfare
 - B. Animal safety, health, and welfare
 - C. Continuity of care

- II. Communication responsibilities and methods of contact should be established.
 - A. Facility and/ or Lab Managers should maintain emergency contact information for all Principal Investigators with research animals in the facility and have them readily available.
 - B. Principal Investigators should maintain emergency contact information for all lab personnel.
 - C. Campus emergency phone numbers should be compiled and readily available in housing and lab areas and should include at least the following:
 1. Emergency- 911
 2. UNT Police Department
 3. UNT Attending Veterinarian
 4. Lab Management
 5. Facility Management
 6. Risk Management Services
 - D. Risk Management Services and/ or the UNT Police Department will maintain communications with local, state and federal officials as required.

- A.** If advanced notice of impending emergencies (such as weather events or facility planned outages) are given, an assessment of supplies and procedures should be made and should consider:
1. Down-time expected
 2. What equipment or environmental elements and controls will be affected?
 3. Will on-site animal care be possible?
 - a) If yes, what supplies may be required to maintain animals appropriately (i.e., fans, heaters, back-up batteries and/ or generators, flashlights, extra caging, portable supplies of water)
 - b) If no, can animals be evacuated and/ or relocated?
 - i. If yes, where and how should animals be evacuated?
 - ii. If no, can short term provisions be provided prior to personnel evacuation?
 - (i) E.g., Fill all food and water containers in animals rooms, provide secondary containers with extra food/water, prop animal room doors open.
 - (ii) If the ability to provide care is significantly impaired and animals cannot be evacuated, euthanasia by a trained individual may be deemed necessary by the UNT Attending Veterinarian, if possible. Euthanasia determining factors may include:
 1. Pain/ distress, beyond rescue
 2. Availability of feed, caging, rooms, environmental controls, specific animal or species requirements
 3. PI input for study specific aims
 4. Loose and unidentified animals
- B.** In the case of an emergency where there may be little to no prior notice it may be necessary to immediately evacuate and relocate or humanely euthanize animals prior to personnel evacuation. Emergency Plans should consider:
1. Methods of prioritizing animals
 - a) Animals in an area of known hazard
 - b) Animals that are a hazard to the public or other animals
 - c) Animals injected with a hazardous substances
 - d) USDA covered species
 - e) Genetically distinct animals
 - f) Irreplaceable animals according to study specific aims

2. Transport and relocation methods
 3. What supplies and documentation should be relocated with the animals
- C. Response and recovery plans following disasters and/ or emergency situations should be included in facility procedures. Once access to facilities is granted:
1. Prioritize and locate areas of known hazards, animals that may be considered hazards, or animals exposed to known hazards first to stabilize these animals and environments.
 2. Animal health assessments should be completed in order to provide critical care and maintain biosecurity.
 3. Triage all animal survivors.
 4. Conduct animal inventory to identify potential escapes or losses. Notify Risk Management Services and the appropriate agencies of possible escapes.
 5. Remove animal carcasses and follow proper storage and disposal procedures.
 6. Evacuate surviving animals or provide animal enclosure cleaning as necessary to minimize animals remaining in poor conditions.
 7. Assess and address equipment and environmental conditions that remain impaired.

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