



Cornell University
Cornell Center for Animal Resources and Education

CARE546.01 Socialization and Exercise for Research Dogs in Research Facilities

The intent of this procedure is to describe socialization and exercise given to research dogs (over 12 weeks of age, except bitches with litters). This SOP is intended for animal care staff and investigators handling and caring for dogs. This SOP is approved by the Cornell Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and the Cornell Center for Animal Resources and Education (CARE). Any exemption must be approved by the IACUC prior to its application.

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1. Introduction

Canine socialization and exercise provides dogs with the opportunity to fulfill and express basic non-injurious behavioral needs that are typical to the species. Meeting these behavioral needs by providing a biologically relevant environment (i.e. opportunity to exercise, socialize, and play) will optimize physiologic and psychological wellbeing, thereby enhancing animal welfare.

2. Materials- N/A

3. Procedures

a. Exercise Program Overview

- i. When consistent with research protocols and dogs' health and well-being, research dogs will be housed in compatible groups, or housed singly in enclosures that provide at least two times the Animal Welfare Regulations (AWR) required floor space.
- ii. Dogs that are housed in enclosures that provide less than two times the minimum floor space will be provided an opportunity for regular

exercise and additional human contact at least 3 times per week for a minimal period of 30 minutes each day.

- iii. Exercise options include:
 - Routine exercise is required for all dogs housed in primary enclosures that do not provide floor space $\geq 2x$ the USDA stated minimum requirement. See Animal Welfare Regulation on Exercise Reference below.
 - Releasing animals singly or in compatible groups into an exercise pen or empty room and walking dogs on a leash.
 - Forced-exercise programs (e.g., swimming or walking on treadmill or carousel devices) are not considered to comply with AWR.

b. Group Housed Dogs

- i. Observe group released dogs frequently during exercise to ensure their safety; keep the composition of the group as stable as possible (i.e., the members of the group should be the same each time).
- ii. Do not release females in proestrus or estrus with intact males.
- iii. Clean and sanitize exercise rooms between exercise sessions of dogs from separate rooms to minimize disease transmission. Only combine dogs of similar microbiologic status in groups.

c. Singly Housed Dogs

- i. Exercise singly housed dogs alone.
- ii. If any dog is housed in such a way that it has no sensory contact with other dogs, provide positive human contact at least 5 days per week for at least 20 minutes.
- iii. Stroking, grooming or other physical contact within the cage is acceptable socialization if the dog cannot be removed from its cage.
- iv. Fearful behavior, methods for low stress socialization:
 - Sit passively, avoid eye contact, and allow the dog to approach at will.
 - Gradually increase active contact as fearful behavior decreases.

Note: Exercise may consist of walking on a leash or release into an exercise pen accompanied by a person. It is not acceptable to count time spent on cage cleaning or other husbandry activities toward the 20 minute human contact.

d. Record Keeping Requirements

- i. Document the type and duration of exercise and enrichment that each animal receives in the animal record according to CARE SOP 542.

e. Exemptions

- i. Grant exemptions from social housing, exercise recommendations or additional human contact only for the following reasons:
 - It will adversely affect the health or well-being of the dogs, as determined by the attending veterinarian.
 - The dog exhibits aggressive or vicious behavior.
 - The investigator has scientific justification for the exemption as stated in the IACUC approved protocol.
 - Ensure that the IACUC has reviewed and approved the exemptions before they are instituted.

Note: Emergency exemptions may be made by the attending veterinarian, with the earliest reasonable notification of and review by the IACUC.

f. Review exemptions on a regular basis as follows:

- i. Permanent exemptions are reviewed semi-annually by IACUC.
- ii. Temporary exemptions are reviewed every 30 days by the attending veterinarian.

4. Safety

- a. Working with dogs in a kennel setting can be very loud. Check with facility manager regarding requirement for hearing protection and refer to CARE SOP 715 regarding personal protective equipment.
- b. Refer to CARE Zoonosis web page for zoonotic information specific to dogs.
- c. Observe CARE SOP 707 for animal related injuries.
- d. Dogs have the potential to cause allergies in humans. Please refer to Cornell's Environmental Health and Safety information regarding animal related allergens (see reference below).

5. Contingencies

- a. Post contact information for emergency assistance in a conspicuous location within the animal facility.
- b. Emergency veterinary care is available at all times including after working hours and on weekends and holidays by CARE (pager 1-800-349-2456).

6. References

- a. *Animal Welfare Act and Animal Welfare Regulations*. Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 3.7 and 3.8, Chapter 1, Title 9, 2002.
http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/downloads/awr/9cfr3.8.txt
- b. *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*. National Research Council; National Academy Press, Washington, DC, 1996.

- c. CARE SOP 542 Maintaining Clinical Records for Animal Research Models:
<http://www.research.cornell.edu/CARE/documents/SOPs/CARE542.pdf>
- d. CARE Zoonosis web page
<http://www.research.cornell.edu/care/zoonoses.html>
- e. Allergens Prevention web page:
<http://www.research.cornell.edu/Care/documents/OHS/AllergyPreventionFactSheet.pdf>
- f. CARE SOP 707 Animal Related Injury:
<http://www.research.cornell.edu/Care/documents/OHS/AllergyPreventionFactSheet.pdf>
- g. CARE SOP 715 Personal Protective Equipment:
<http://www.research.cornell.edu/CARE/documents/SOPs/CARE715.pdf>

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