

**UBC ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE**  
**POLICY 004**  
**Animal Welfare**

**Date Approved: November 18, 2022**

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### **1.0 PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the requirements for responding to, reporting and documenting incidences of compromised welfare at any site used for animal research and teaching under the auspices of the University of British Columbia (UBC).

### **2.0 SCOPE**

This policy applies to all animals used in Research, Teaching or Breeding within the UBC Animal Care and Use Program (ACUP) which fall under the review of UBC's Animal Care Committee (ACC).

### **3.0 DEFINITIONS**

**Animal Welfare:** the physical and mental state of an individual animal and how the animal is experiencing the conditions in which it lives (CCAC guidelines: Animal welfare assessment, 2021).

**Reportable Animal Welfare Incident (RAWI):** An event that leads to significant mortality or a serious noncompliance with CCAC standards leading to suspension of animal-based activities. See [CCAC frequently asked questions: CCAC reportable animal welfare incidents](#) for more details.

**Morbidity:** Compromised welfare due to any cause.

**Mortality:** Death.

**Expected morbidity/mortality:** Any morbidity/mortality risks described in an animal use protocol (AUP). Examples include: those potentially expected as a result of an experimental procedure (e.g. surgery), due to the phenotype/genotype of the animal, or those that reach scientific/experimental endpoint.

**Unexpected Morbidity:** All conditions that are 1) non-experimentally related, AND/OR 2) not described in the AUP, AND/OR 3) cause increased morbidity beyond that described in the AUP. Examples include: spontaneous conditions unrelated to the experiment (tumour development, conjunctivitis, dermatitis, stereotypic behaviours); complications due to experimental procedures (e.g. recurrent post-surgical infections); unexpected change in progression of adverse effects.

**Unexpected Mortality:** All unexpected animal deaths. This includes those euthanized at humane endpoint/humane intervention point (HE/HIP), those that died during procedures (DDP), or those found dead (FD). Examples include: higher than expected mortality rates from experimental complications (e.g. increased numbers of animals unexpectedly reaching humane endpoint prior to experimental endpoints); sudden death.

#### **4.0 POLICY STATEMENTS**

1. All personnel working with animals must follow all procedures and monitoring requirements as outlined in the Animal Use Protocol (AUP) under which the animals are listed, and ensure the welfare of the animals is safeguarded at all times.
2. All animals with compromised welfare (morbidity) must receive appropriate treatment, care, or be euthanized, within a timeframe corresponding to the severity and/or risk of deterioration of the animal's welfare.
3. Unexpected morbidity must be reported without delay to a UBC Clinical Veterinarian according to this Policy's Guidelines (Policy 4 guidelines).
4. Unexpected mortality must be reported without delay to a UBC Clinical Veterinarian, who will investigate the underlying cause.
5. Suspected Reportable Animal Welfare Incidences (RAWIs) must be reported to the ACC immediately. The ACC must communicate confirmed or suspected RAWIs to the CCAC within 14 days of the incident.
6. A UBC Clinical Veterinarian or designate has the authority to euthanize any animal or institute measures to protect the welfare of any animal. This includes instances where the PI or their designate cannot be reached in the case of an emergency.
7. PIs or their designate must comply with the UBC Clinical Veterinarian's plan for treatment or euthanasia.
8. Animals that have reached their humane endpoint, as outlined in the approved AUP, must be euthanized. Only a UBC Clinical Veterinarian can approve exceptions.
9. Welfare assessments for all animals must be performed at sufficient regularity to identify systemic welfare risks, anticipate welfare implications, and inform future decisions concerning the care and use of animals.
10. If the negative welfare of an animal is suspected to be related to a non-compliance event (see UBC ACC Policy 01), the Post Approval Monitoring (PAM) Team must be notified.

#### **5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. It is the responsibility of any person involved in the care and use of animals to follow this policy.
2. The Principal Investigator is responsible for:
  - a. Listing all unexpected morbidities and mortalities within the progress report of the AUP at annual and full protocol renewal.
  - b. Defining expected baseline morbidity and mortality in the AUPs

- c. Providing current 24-hour contact information for persons responsible for responding to notifications about animals whose welfare is declining or who are found dead.
3. Study Team members/Animal Facility personnel are responsible for:
  - a. Responding to incidences of morbidity or mortality
  - b. Informing their UBC Clinical Vet and Principal Investigator of unexpected morbidities and mortalities.
4. Facility Managers (or equivalent for alternative housing sites) are responsible for:
  - a. Keeping a record of all unexpected animal morbidity and mortality (“morbidity/mortality” logs), whether reported by facility staff or researchers, and submitting these logs monthly to their UBC Clinical Veterinarian and the PAM Team.
5. UBC Clinical Veterinarians are responsible for:
  - a. Ensuring availability to respond to concerns about animal welfare at any time.
  - b. Discussing concerns with the Principal Investigator (PI), their designate, or animal facility personnel, to determine the most appropriate course of action for animals with welfare concerns.
  - c. Investigating any unexpected morbidity and mortality and reporting morbidity and mortality information to the UBC ACC.
6. The UBC ACC is responsible for:
  - a. Reporting confirmed cases of RAWIs to the CCAC as per the CCAC reporting instructions.
  - b. Reviewing expected baseline and annually reported morbidity and mortality numbers

## **6.0 REFERENCES**

1. Fraser, D. 2008. Understanding animal welfare: the science in its cultural context. WileyBlackwell. UK.
2. CCAC guidelines: Animal welfare assessment, April 2021