



Animal Program Policy

Title: Evacuation of Animal Facility
Date Created: 3/8/2016
Date Reviewed: 11/15/2023

Introduction

In the case of an emergency in the building, the fire alarm will sound, and all occupants are required by law to leave the building immediately. This can pose a problem for workers in the animal facility, who may be in the process of performing procedures with animals. Two main principles should be considered when reacting to a fire alarm in these circumstances:

- 1) Individuals must consider their own safety and comply with the law; and
- 2) Pain and distress to animals must be avoided or minimized.

Response

Alarms should be presumed genuine; do not alter your course of action based on the assumption that an alarm may be for practice or testing purposes. The following course of action should be taken in case of alarms sounding while working with animals:

- 1) If a surgical or other procedure is being performed requiring anesthesia to avoid pain and distress, the animal should be immediately, quickly, and safely euthanized by one of the following approved methods. Following euthanasia, immediately exit the animal facility and the building as per Forsyth evacuation policy.

Euthanasia Methods:

- a. Mice – cervical dislocation, or bilateral thoracotomy (opening both sides of the chest cavity)
- b. Rats – bilateral thoracotomy only.

Specific training in these methods must be obtained from animal facility staff for all animal users approved to perform surgery.

- 2) If procedures are being performed that involve minimal pain and distress, the animals should be returned to their cages, and cage lids replaced. Do not return the cages to the animal room or rack. Evacuate the building as rapidly and safely as possible.

When you are allowed to re-enter the building, return to the animal facility and return cages with live animals to their respective racks or otherwise ensure that they have access to food or water. Clean up the work area and dispose of animal carcasses. In the rare case when access to the building is not immediately granted, contact Yoga for further instructions.