
PACUC POLICY

WIRE-BOTTOM CAGING FOR RODENTS

- 1) It is the PACUC's policy that, whenever feasible, rodents be housed in solid bottom caging with bedding.
- 2) Wire-bottom caging is acceptable for housing rodents, except for:
 - Long-term rodent housing, defined as greater than twelve (12) months.
 - Housing rats with a body weight in excess of 500 grams for longer than two months.

in which case the use of solid-bottom cages is the standard.

- 3) All wire-bottom caging currently in use at Purdue University, that houses rodents exceeding the time and body weight limits listed above, are to be modified with either solid resting boards that cover one-third of the floor space, by providing an enrichment PCV tube, or replacing with solid bottom caging. Modification should occur only after review by and discussion with impacted research groups. Request for exceptions to this policy will require review and approval by the PACUC.
- 4) Wire-bottom cages may be considered for approval for long-term housing of rodents or housing large rodents, as long as foot health is maintained. Each situation must be reviewed and approved by the PACUC. There may be justifications for the use of wire-bottom instead of solid-bottom cages. An example of such justification might include contact (e.g., dermal application) or oral dosing studies, in which there may be a risk of the animal having additional contact with the compound if housed in a solid bottom cage with bedding.
- 5) When the use of wire-bottom cages is approved, an evaluation process must be in place to closely monitor the health of the animals, particularly the feet of larger animals on longer studies. The evaluation of the animals will be through the direct and frequent visual examination during the regular cage changes by the animal caretakers and interaction of the animals by the research staff. A mechanism that immediately alerts the veterinary staff should lesions develop needs to be part of the program.
- 6) If wire bottom caging is in use, the management of the animal facility where the animals are housed should be prepared with a sufficient number of resting boards or other ways (e.g., solid bottom caging) to provide animals that develop foot lesions relief from the wire and time to heal. Rodents with evidence of foot / leg lesions cannot be housed solely on wire-bottom caging.
- 7) In addition, rodents housed in wire bottom cages, should be provided environmental enrichment such as but not restricted to PVC tubes or small nyla-bones. Environmental enrichment objects should only be added after review by and discussion with impacted research groups. Request for exceptions to this policy will require review and approval by the PACUC.