



## Physical Restraint - Policy

Restraint is the use of manual or mechanical means to limit some or all of an animal's normal movement for such purposes as examination, collection of samples, drug administration, etc. Typically, animals are restrained for brief periods, usually minutes, in most research applications. Some species can be trained, through use of positive reinforcement, to cooperate or remain immobile for brief procedures.

Restraint devices must be suitable in size, design, and operation to minimize discomfort or injury to the animal. The ACUP must include a description of the device, the duration of restraint, and justification for use for review by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

## Prolonged Restraint

Prolonged restraint (generally an hour or longer) is to be avoided unless it is essential for achieving research objectives ([Guide 2011](#), p. 29). Approval of prolonged restraint by the IACUC requires scientific justification, a description of the restraint device, the duration of restraint, and related monitoring procedures and methods to minimize animal distress (e.g. acclimation to the device). Animals that do not adapt to such systems must be removed from the study.

Restraint of agricultural animals, when part of normal husbandry procedures and in accordance with "*Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching*" ([Ag Guide 2020](#)), will not be considered prolonged. These are standard methods in the agricultural setting and animals generally adapt to and tolerate these husbandry methods. If this same manner of restraint will be used for project work, the details should be included in the protocol.

## Physical Restraint - Guidelines

- Restraint devices should not be used simply as a convenience in handling or managing animals.
- When restraint devices are used, they should be specifically designed to accomplish project goals that are impossible or impractical to accomplish by other means, or to prevent injury to animals or personnel.
- The period of restraint should be the minimum required to accomplish the project objectives.
- When possible, animals placed in restraint devices should be offered positive reinforcements to acclimate to restraint equipment and related personnel.
- Provisions should be made for monitoring the animal at appropriate intervals.
- The presence of any lesion, illness, or severe behavioral change often necessitates temporary or permanent removal of the animal from restraint. In this case, contact the Attending Veterinarian promptly for veterinary care and assistance.
- Personnel involved with the study must be trained on the specific equipment, procedures, duration and monitoring.