

1. PURPOSE

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) describes routine husbandry procedures for cats.

2. RESPONSIBILITY

Animal care staff, veterinary care staff, facility manager.

3. MATERIALS

- 3.1. Personal Protective equipment
 - 3.1.1. Fit-tested N95 respirator
 - 3.1.2. Lab coat
 - 3.1.3. Gloves
 - 3.1.4. Shoe cover
 - 3.1.5. Bonnet
- 3.2. Cage cards
- 3.3. Feed
- 3.4. Bowls for food and water
- 3.5. Litter pans and litter
- 3.6. Cages
- 3.7. Clean environmental enrichment devices
- 3.8. Disinfectant

4. PROCEDURES

- 4.1. Observation of animals and environment:
 - 4.1.1. Observe all animals daily for illness, injury, general condition, and abnormal behavior. Report any health or behavioral abnormalities to veterinary care staff.
 - 4.1.2. Observe environmental conditions at room and caging level (temperature, humidity, light, noise, hazard). Report any abnormal environmental conditions to the supervisor.
 - 4.1.3. Animals found dead are to be reported to veterinary care staff. Carcasses should be removed from the enclosure promptly, identified, and placed in the refrigerator.
 - 4.1.4. Maintain a daily log of observations, environmental parameters, husbandry and maintenance procedures.
- 4.2. Emergency and holiday care:
 - 4.2.1. Provide routine care and husbandry for all animals on weekends and holidays.
- 4.3. Records and documentation:
 - 4.3.1. Identify each cat with a identification photo, collar and/or microchip.
 - 4.3.2. Record keeping:
 - 4.3.2.1. Keep a day-to-day log of events, including medical procedures, for the life of the cat.
 - 4.3.2.2. Maintain records on procurement, transport, and disposal of all cats and an inventory of cats in the facility.

- 4.4. Food and water:
 - 4.4.1. Feed animals to meet current Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) guidelines for feline nutrition
 - 4.4.2. Food storage:
 - 4.4.2.1. Store feed off the floor and 4–6 inches away from walls, in a vermin-proof storeroom.
 - 4.4.2.2. Store open feedbags in leak-proof containers with tightly fitting lids.
 - 4.4.2.3. Maintain temperature and humidity control in the storeroom. Avoid temperatures above 21°C and extremes in humidity.
 - 4.4.2.4. Use feed before the expiration date.
 - 4.4.2.5. Stack feed in a manner that allows easy reading of the expiration date.
 - 4.4.3. Feed adult cats at least once a day, as recommended by the veterinarian.
 - 4.4.4. Offer fresh, clean, potable, uncontaminated water *ad lib*.
 - 4.4.5. Monitor water quality routinely to ensure that it is free of contaminants. Refer to Microbiological Monitoring SOP.
- 4.5. Social and environmental enrichment:
 - 4.5.1. Group house cats and allow them to roam free within the room whenever possible.
 - 4.5.2. Provide enrichment devices in the room, cage or enclosure, e.g., ladders, perches, toys, cardboard boxes, blankets, etc.
 - 4.5.3. Provide additional enrichment, e.g., additional exercise time, increased human contact, additional enrichment devices in the cage, whenever possible, particularly when cats are housed individually.
- 4.6. Quarantine procedures:
 - 4.6.1. Cats acquired from approved commercial specific-pathogen free (SPF) suppliers do not require quarantine.
- 4.7. Pest control:
 - 4.7.1. Refer to Vermin Control SOP.
- 4.8. Environment and environmental control:
 - 4.8.1. Maintain room temperatures between 18°C to 22°C.
 - 4.8.2. Maintain relative humidity between 40% and 60%.
 - 4.8.3. Provide 15 complete air changes per hour of 100% outside air.
 - 4.8.4. Maintain a daily log of room temperature and humidity.
- 4.9. Lighting:
 - 4.9.1. Provide a regular diurnal lighting cycle.
 - 4.9.2. Lights are controlled by timers with a photoperiod of 12 to 14 hours of light. Check the timer performance regularly.
- 4.10. Space requirements
 - 4.10.1. When housed in cages, use an appropriate sized cage for the size and number of cats, meeting or exceeding Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) recommendations.
 - 4.10.2. Group-house cats in a room with a minimum of 0.56m² of floor space per cat.
 - 4.10.3. Provide high perching space for each animal.
 - 4.10.4. Provide sufficient and appropriate space for species-specific sleeping requirements.
- 4.11. Cleaning and sanitation of cages, housing room and equipment:
 - 4.11.1. Scoop litter and remove soiled litter daily. Perform a total litter change at least once per week. Observe for abnormal feces and alert veterinary care staff if necessary.
 - 4.11.2. Sanitize water bowls, feeders/food bowls and litter pans at least once per week.
 - 4.11.3. Replace enrichment devices that are not sanitizable every two weeks or more frequently as needed.

- 4.11.4. Clean and sanitize cages thoroughly at least every two weeks, more frequently if needed.
IMPORTANT: Whenever quaternary ammonias are used for cleaning, thoroughly rinse and dry all surfaces before cats are allowed to come in contact with them. Cats are very susceptible to chemical burns from this compound.
- 4.11.5. Sweep floor daily and disinfect once weekly.
- 4.11.6. Wipe down all surfaces such as sinks, doors, door jams and doorknobs, windows, cart tops, shelves, etc. with the disinfectant solution once per month.
- 4.11.7. Clean walls yearly with disinfectant solution.
- 4.12. Transportation
 - 4.12.1. Refer to Animal Transport and Use Outside of Animal Facilities SOP.
- 4.13. Waste Management:
 - 4.13.1. Deposit non-regulated or non-infectious Medical Waste and soiled materials in dumpsters.
 - 4.13.2. Regulated or infectious Medical Waste is processed by McGill University's Waste Management program.

5. SAFETY

- 5.1. Handle cats carefully as they may bite or scratch. Any incident of this nature must be reported. Refer to Animal Related Injury SOP.
- 5.2. If you are a pregnant woman, please consult your physician and/or McGill University's Environmental Health and Safety department before working with cats.
- 5.3. Working with cats can trigger related allergies. Always wear the appropriate PPE. Consult the [Allergy Prevention](#) factsheet.
- 5.4. Preparation disinfecting solution:
 - 5.4.1. Wear personal protective equipment as per manufacturer's recommendations when preparing and using disinfectant solution.
 - 5.4.2. Dilute according to manufacturer's recommendation.
 - 5.4.3. Clean surfaces prior to disinfection to remove any organic material.
 - 5.4.4. Apply disinfectant and allow for adequate contact time.

SOP REVISION HISTORY

DATE	NEW VERSION
2023.07.19	2. RESPONSIBILITY Animal care staff, facility supervisor, facilities manager
2023.07.19	3.1. Personal Protective equipment 3.1.1. Fit-tested N95 respirator 3.1.2. Lab coat 3.1.3. Gloves 3.1.4. Shoe cover 3.1.5. Bonnet
2023.07.19	4.1. Observation of animals and environment: 4.1.1. Observe all animals daily for illness, injury, and general condition, and abnormal behavior , including weekends and holidays. Report any health or behavioral abnormalities to veterinary care staff. 4.1.2. Observe environmental conditions at room and caging level (temperature, humidity, light, noise, hazard). Report any abnormal environmental conditions to the supervisor. 4.1.3. Animals found dead are to be reported to veterinary care staff. Carcasses should be removed from the enclosure promptly, identified, and placed in the refrigerator. 4.1.4. Maintain a daily log of observations, environmental parameters, husbandry and maintenance procedures.
2023.07.19	4.2.2. Make provisions for emergency care by providing both work and after hours contact information for Principal Investigators (PI's) and their staff. Provide special requests or instructions if needed.
2023.07.19	4.4.1. Feed animals to meet current National Research Council (USA) Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) guidelines recommendations for feline nutrition.
2023.07.19	4.4.3. Feed adult cats at least once a day, unless otherwise as recommended by the veterinarian. Offer ad lib (free choice) feeding unless required by the protocol or by the veterinarian.

2023.07.19	4.4.4. Monitor water quality routinely to ensure that it is free of contaminants that could potentially expose animals to chemical or infectious agents. Refer to Microbiological Monitoring SOP for water quality monitoring requirements.
2023.07.19	4.5.2. Provide enrichment devices in the room, cage, or enclosure , e.g., ladders, perches, toys, cardboard boxes, and blankets, etc.
2023.07.19	4.5.3. Provide additional enrichment, e.g., additional exercise time, increased human contact, additional enrichment devices in the cage, whenever possible, particularly when # cats are housed individually.
2023.07.19	4.5.4. Refer to Environmental Enrichment Program for Cats SOP.
2023.07.19	4.6.1. Cats acquired from approved commercial specific-pathogen free (SPF) suppliers do not require quarantine. 4.6.2. Quarantine cats from non-SPF vendors for a minimum of 14 days. Refer to Cat Conditioning SOP.
2023.07.19	4.7. Euthanasia and disposal of dead animals; 4.7.1. Euthanize cats as per Large Animal Euthanasia SOP. 4.7.2. Euthanasia must be conducted by trained and experienced staff. 4.7.3. Dispose of dead animals by incineration.
2023.07.19	4.8.1. Refer to Vermin Control SOP for a description of the vermin control program.
2023.07.19	4.8.2. Maintain relative humidity between 40% and 70 60 %.
2023.07.19	4.9.3. Provide 10 to 15 complete air changes per hour of 100% outside air.
2023.07.19	4.11.2. Group-house cats in a room with a minimum of four square feet 0.56m² of floor space per cat. 4.11.3. Provide high perching space for each animal. 4.11.4. Provide sufficient and appropriate space for species-specific sleeping requirements.
2023.07.19	4.12.4. Clean walls twice per year with disinfectant solution.
2023.07.19	5.2 If you are a pregnant woman, please consult your physician and/or McGill University's Environmental Health and Safety department seek medical counseling before working with cats.
2023.07.19	5.3. Working with cats can trigger related allergies. Check with the facility manager regarding requirements for personal protective equipment and refer to SOP. Always wear the appropriate PPE. Consult the Allergy Prevention factsheet.