

1. PURPOSE

The intent of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to describe limitations for housing rodents in wire-bottom cages.

2. RESPONSIBILITY

Facility Animal Care Committees (FACCs), principal investigators (PIs) and their staff, veterinarian, facility manager.

3. PROCEDURES

- 3.1. The default housing system for maintaining rodents at McGill University is solid-bottom caging with bedding.
- 3.2. The use of wire-bottom cages can exceptionally be approved by the FACC when there is an appropriate scientific rationale for not using solid-bottom caging with bedding. Appropriate scientific rationale for using wire-bottom cages include, but are not limited to:
 - 3.2.1. Prevention/ limitation of coprophagia.
 - 3.2.2. Eliminate ingestion of bedding or bedding contaminants.
 - 3.2.3. Contact studies in which there may be a risk of the animals having additional contact with the compound.
 - 3.2.4. Medical conditions that may be exacerbated by use of bedding (ex.: diabetic or burn models).
 - 3.2.5. Metabolic studies in which feces and urine are collected and/or water and food consumption must be accurately measured with collection of spills.
 - 3.2.6. Assessment of copulation in rats by detection of the copulatory plug.
 - 3.2.7. Studies involving short term (less than 8 hours), individual, restricted feeding.
- 3.3. For all rodents housed on wired-bottom cages:
 - 3.3.1. The investigator must provide a detailed justification for the use of this type of housing in the Animal Use Protocol (AUP).
 - 3.3.2. The rodents must be provided with environmental enrichment. Exemptions to providing environmental enrichment must be justified and approved by the FACC.
 - 3.3.3. A welfare assessment and health monitoring program must be in place to regularly evaluate the well-being and the health (particularly of the feet/legs) of rodents. Details on the program must be described in the AUP and approved by the FACC. In addition:
 - 3.3.3.1. All animals must be evaluated by direct and frequent visual examination during the regular cage changes by the animal care and/or research staff.
 - 3.3.3.2. Any lesions or discomfort must be reported immediately to the veterinary staff.
 - 3.3.3.3. Rodents with evidence of foot/leg lesions must not be solely housed on wire-bottom caging;
- 3.4. All rodents not directly involved in a study, breeding, or recovering from anesthesia must be housed in solid-bottom cages.
- 3.5. Purchase of equipment and environmental enrichment devices must be approved by the veterinarian.
- 3.6. Request for exceptions to this policy must be reviewed and approved by the FACC.

SOP REVISION HISTORY

DATE	NEW VERSION
2023.08.14	2. RESPONSIBILITY Facility Animal Care Committees (FACCs), principal investigators (PIs) and their staff, veterinarian , facility supervisor /manager.
2023.08.14	3.1. The default housing system for maintaining rodents at McGill University and its affiliated institution is solid-bottom caging with bedding.
2023.08.14	3.2. The use of wire-bottom cages can exceptionally be approved by the FACC when there is an appropriate scientific rationale for not using solid-bottom caging with bedding. Appropriate scientific rationale for using wire-bottom cages include, but are not limited to :
2023.08.14	3.3.3. A welfare assessment and health monitoring program must be in place to regularly evaluate the well-being and the health (particularly of the feet/legs) of rodents. Details on the program must be described in the AUP and approved by the FACC. In addition:
2023.08.14	3.5. All future rodent caging purchases must be for solid bottom cages unless the caging is needed to replace old wire bottom caging or expand existing inventories that are needed for a specific, approved, study where the use of wire bottom caging has been scientifically justified. Purchase of equipment and environmental enrichment devices must be approved by the veterinarian.