

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO  
INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE**

**Policy and Guidelines on Restraint**

**Immobilization/Restraint**

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

**Review**

If restraint devices are required, they should be suitable in size, design, and operation to minimize discomfort or injury to the animal. If restraint devices are required, they need to be reviewed by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and identified in the protocol with a description of the device, and the duration of restraint.

**Prolonged Restraint**

Prolonged restraint should be avoided unless it is essential for achieving research objectives. Approval by the IACUC requires scientific justification, a description of the restraint device, the duration of restraint, monitoring procedures and methods to minimize animal distress (e.g. acclimation to the device).

**Important guidelines for restraint of any duration**

- When restraint devices are used, they should be specifically designed to accomplish research 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 research objectives.
- If possible, animals placed in restraint devices should be given training to adapt to the equipment and personnel.
- Provision should be made for observation of the animal at appropriate intervals.
- Veterinary care should be provided if lesions or illnesses associated with restraint are observed. The presence of lesions, illnesses, or severe behavioral change often necessitates temporary or permanent removal of the animal from restraint.

The policy and guidelines are based on recommendations from The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 1996 edition.