

The University of Alabama Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee Reporting the Unexpected Death of a Vertebrate Animal

1) Protocols Performed in the Animal Care Facility (ACF)

If the unexpected death of a vertebrate animal is discovered in the ACF, the death should be reported as soon as possible to the ACF staff and the PI and recorded on the room log. The staff will follow established ACF procedures including contacting the animal program's veterinarian. If the death is outside normal business hours and the animal because of its nature or the protocol will decompose unusually rapidly (so that a necropsy or other follow up procedures would not be possible), the animal should be preserved by refrigeration in a closed container or in a method pre-arranged with the veterinarian; the ACF staff should still be informed as soon as possible and the death recorded on the room log. Given the circumstances of the death, the veterinarian may request additional actions to be taken.

2) Protocols Performed in an Approved Satellite Facility

a) Protocols Involving Vertebrate Animals Housed Singly or Housed in Small Groups

If the unexpected death of a vertebrate animal is discovered in an approved satellite facility, the animal care facility and the PI should be notified as soon as possible, and the death and circumstances surrounding the discovery (time, environmental conditions, appearance of animal, and any other potentially pertinent information) should be entered into the animal log of the satellite facility. The ACF staff will follow established procedures including contacting the animal program's veterinarian. If the death is outside normal business hours and the animal because of its nature or the protocol will decompose unusually rapidly (so that a necropsy or other follow up procedures would not be possible), the animal should be preserved by refrigeration in a closed container or in a method pre-arranged with the veterinarian; the ACF staff should still be informed as soon as possible and the death recorded on the room log. Given the circumstances of the death, the veterinarian may request additional actions to be taken.

b) Protocols Involving Large Collections of Fish or Aquatic Juvenile Amphibians

Given the normal life expectancy of these animals, an occasional animal death is not an unexpected event in large collections of fish or aquatic juvenile amphibians. If the death of an animal is discovered in such a collection in an approved satellite facility, the death and circumstances surrounding the discovery (time, environmental conditions, appearance of animal, and any other potentially pertinent information) should be entered into the animal log of the satellite facility. The animal should be preserved by refrigeration in a closed container or in a method pre-arranged with the veterinarian, and the carcass should be saved for a period of one month. If the rate of animal death during this month remains normal, the carcass can be disposed of following approved procedures.

However, if the rate of animal death should increase above background, the change should be reported as soon as possible to the ACF staff and the PI and the death recorded on the room log. The staff will follow established ACF procedures including contacting the animal program's veterinarian. Deceased animals should continue to be preserved, and the deaths should continue to be entered into the animal log of the satellite facility. Given the circumstances of the situation, the veterinarian may request additional actions to be taken.