

POLICY ON WIRE-BOTTOM CAGES

Rodents should be housed in solid-bottom cages provided with bedding material. If researchers wish to house rodents in wire-bottom (or other open-bottom caging) they must provide a scientific rationale in an approved animal use protocol. The rationale must be reviewed and approved by the Animal Care and Facilities Committee (ACFC).

TRANSITION TO THE POLICY

Where wire-bottom caging has been used for reasons of custom or because it is the type of caging that was available, Laboratory Animal Services will replace wire-bottom caging with solid-bottom shoebox caging after informing the researchers. Caging type will not be changed precipitously where it might be a variable in an ongoing research project. If needed, principle investigators will be given the opportunity to submit a protocol amendment to continue the use of wire-bottom cages.

REGULATORY BASIS FOR THIS POLICY

Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 1996, p. 24

“Rodents are often housed on wire flooring, which enhances sanitation of the cage by enabling urine and feces to pass through to a collection tray. However, some evidence suggests that solid-bottom caging, with bedding, is preferred by rodents. Solid-bottom caging, with bedding is therefore recommended for rodents. Vinyl-coated flooring is often used for other species, such as dogs and nonhuman primates. IACUC review on this aspect of the animal care program should ensure that caging enhances animal well-being consistent with good sanitation and the requirements of the research project.”

AAALAC “Connection” Newsletter

http://www.aaalac.org/publications/Connection/Summer_2000.pdf

This not an official “Position Statement” but the AAALAC Council has made clear its position over the years that use of wire-bottom caging is to be discouraged and must be justified in an approved protocol. This article provides arguments for not using wire-bottom cages.

Approved by the Rutgers Animal Care and Facilities Committee March 22, 2006
