

The Use of Rodent Environmental Enrichment Devices at the Frederick National Lab

A Notice from the Frederick National Lab Animal Care and Use Committee

The *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*, the standard used to assess quality laboratory animal science programs across the world, states that "Environments that fail to meet the animals' needs may result in...behavioral disorders that may compromise both animal well-being and scientific validity. The primary enclosure or space may need to be enriched to prevent such effects."¹ AAALACi and the animal welfare organizations have placed emphasis on the use of environmental enrichment devices to ensure that current practices fulfill this guideline².

All singly housed animals must be provided with an enrichment device* unless scientifically justified.

The type of enrichment device* will be determined by the facility management in conjunction with the investigative staff.

Please keep in mind that for certain studies (e.g., behavioral) the ACUC understands that the use of environmental enrichment devices may provide unwanted variables in your research results. Any studies that do not wish to utilize enrichment devices must provide justification to the ACUC on the Animal Study Proposal Form (a new section will be added to the form). Exclusions for the use of enrichment devices will be made by the ACUC on a case-by-case basis.

Our goal is to promote the well-being of animals utilized at the Frederick National Lab and to ensure that investigators obtain reliable scientific results. The implementation of this program is focused on achieving both of these goals. Please direct any questions or concerns to the ACUC Office (stahlam@mail.nih.gov). We appreciate your cooperation with this endeavor.

*** Types of enrichment that should be considered: various types of bedding materials, nestlets, disposable igloos, polycarbonate tunnels/tubes, and food treats.**

¹ Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 8th Edition 2011

² Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International (<http://www.aaalac.org>)

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