Policy for the Use of Analgesics

Introduction
Animals can experience pain and distress. It is the ethical and legal obligation of all personnel involved with the use of animals in research to reduce or eliminate pain and distress in research animals whenever such actions do not interfere with the research objectives. The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) has the delegated responsibility and accountability for ensuring that all animals under their oversight are used humanely and in accordance with a number of Federal Regulations and policies. Key to fulfilling the responsibilities for both the Principal Investigator (PI) and the IACUC are:

- Understanding the legal requirements,
- Being able to distinguish pain and distress in animals from their normal state, and
- To relieve or minimize the pain and distress appropriately.

Regulatory Requirements
The IACUC must assure that all aspects of the IACUC protocol that may cause more than momentary pain and/or distress are addressed; alternatives to painful or distressful procedures are considered; and that methods, anesthetics and analgesics to minimize or eliminate pain and distress are included when these methods do not interfere with the research objectives. A written scientific justification is required to be included in the IACUC protocol for any painful or distressful procedure that cannot be relieved or minimized.

The obligation to reduce pain and distress does not end with the review of the IACUC protocol. It is the responsibility of the animal care staff, the research staff, the IACUC, and LAMS veterinary staff to continue to monitor animals for pain, distress, illness, or mortality during the course of the research study. Animals should be monitored for evidence of pain or distress, and should be administered analgesics or have procedures instituted to relieve it, unless scientifically justified. Observations and actions taken to relieve pain or distress must be documented. The animals should be observed a minimum of once daily or more often based on professional judgment. These documents must be available to the IACUC and LAMS veterinary staff. If it is necessary to make significant changes in the IACUC protocol, the PI must submit a modification to the IACUC and receive approval prior to initiation.

Summary
The relief of pain and distress in research animals is ethically sound, humane, and promotes good science.

References
5. NIH Policy Manual 3040-2, Animal Care and Use in the Intramural Program.

This policy was adapted from the National Institutes of Health’s ARAC Guideline “Pain and Distress in Rodents and Rabbits: Responsibilities, Recognition and Alleviation”.

University of Cincinnati
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
APPROVED 5/11/06