

Office of Animal Research Support (OARS)

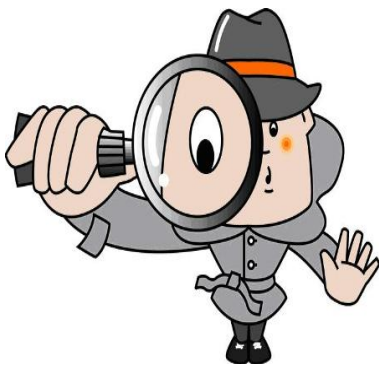


Announcements & Reminders

[2024-2025 IACUC Deadlines and Meeting Dates](#)

[Research Liaison Department Assignments](#)

Investigators are encouraged to submit protocols that are due for 3-year renewal early to allow time for pre-review of the protocol by the research liaisons and veterinarians. This will help expedite the review and approval of the protocol. Should you have any questions, please contact [OARS](#).



Upcoming Facility Inspections

The following facilities are being inspected in August (GSF) and October (AMISB, BCMM, CMHC, GML, LCI, LEPH, SEAMCO, VEHICLES, WC, YPI, YSB)

Please contact [Shannon Denison](#) if you need further information. As always, please check your spaces periodically to ensure the fulfillment of IACUC expectations. The [inspection checklist](#) the IACUC utilizes to document findings is available on the OARS [website](#).

IMPORTANT: If you have locked cabinets, drawers, or boxes that contain drugs or materials with expiration dates, please make sure that they are unlocked for the IACUC to inspect the contents. If you do not want to leave the container unlocked and unsupervised, then the IACUC's expectation is that you be readily available to open them. Contact [Shannon Denison](#) with your contact information and the areas of interest.

USDA Site Visit:

From August 5-7, the USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service conducted an unannounced inspection of Yale animal facilities. This inspection was a follow-up to a “critical non-compliant incident” from March. Unfortunately, we received two more citations that focused on animal handling—one was again identified as “critical” since the animal required veterinary care.

This new critical incident restarts the 18-month period of enhanced monitoring. There are several consequences of enhanced monitoring:

- The USDA will now inspect Yale animal facilities *at least* 3 times a year, as opposed to annual inspections for institutions in good standing.
- The inspection report will be made public and will likely attract the attention of animal rights extremist groups, e.g., PETA, HSUS, SAEN.
- Heavy strain placed on program personnel (e.g., YARC, VCS, OARS, IACUC), as these multiple, long inspections reduce their ability to provide customer service to faculty, research staff, and their animals.

In order to minimize the likelihood of future findings, IACUC/OARS will be re-evaluating several protocols to revise various sections, e.g., literature searches, Variations of Standardized Care, removing duplicative information that could lead to confusion and/or a finding, etc. We appreciate your patience as we try to regain our positive standing with the USDA.

Please help us help you and Yale minimize noncompliance so that the public attention Yale receives is focused on your cutting-edge research endeavors, not failing to meet the public’s expectation for responsible animal research.

AAALAC Site Visit

Our triennial AAALAC reaccreditation site visit will be during Fall 2024. AAALAC accreditation is a means by which the university demonstrates a high standard of animal welfare, effective practices regarding care, and conscientious use—all coordinated to enhance the quality of the research.

During the site visit, the AAALAC Council members and consultants will visit:

- All animal housing areas—both YARC and PI-managed facilities
- All areas where USDA species are used
- Most “special use” areas, e.g., imaging, behavioral testing cores, prolonged restraint
- As many survival surgery laboratories as time permits
- Laboratories they specifically request to visit

We will attempt to schedule the site visit in late September or early October, but we will not know exactly when until mid-August. We will keep you informed as we learn more. We will be holding a Town Hall on August 27th at 11:00am in BML 131 to answer any questions.

Communicating with VCS and the Clinical Veterinarians

There have been multiple incidents in the past couple of years when a researcher failed to promptly follow veterinary orders. This has unfortunately led to increased suffering and, in some cases, the death of animals. We are obligated to report these noncompliances to NIH-OLAW and AAALAC.

The clinical veterinarians have the final say regarding when an animal must be euthanized and the timing of the procedure. We cannot be clearer on this regulatory requirement. There will be considerably less tolerance for future noncompliance regarding failing to communicate with and comply with directives from the veterinary group. Consequences may include stopping the responsible individual from continuing animal work and turning off facility access.

Health On Track (HoT)

Yale’s new self-service system for tracking health requirements, [Health On Track](#), is now available. As outlined in an [earlier communication](#), Health On Track centralizes the management of health requirements. Health requirements may include vaccines, examinations, and/or tests related to your position at Yale.

Do I have a health requirement?

If you are identified as an individual with active job-related requirements, you will receive an email notification alerting you of any outstanding health requirements. This notification will direct you to the Health on Track portal, where information is provided to explain why a requirement is assigned and how to fulfill that requirement.

- Sign into Health on Track with your Yale NetID and password, complete several one-time consents, then follow directions to satisfy your requirements.
- Employees with upcoming requirements will receive a 60-day reminder prior to the due date.
- Weekly reminders will begin 30 days prior to the due date.
- Employees with overdue requirements will continue to receive weekly emails.
- Employees who need vaccines or blood work to satisfy requirements can get these free of charge through [Employee Health](#).

Your manager and Human Resources Business Partner will receive weekly reports listing employees with outstanding requirements. We encourage you to complete your health requirements as soon as possible.

If you do not receive a notification for health requirements, no action is required.

Other important details

- [Training](#) is available, including videos and user guides.
- Health On Track replaces the Training Management System (TMS) and the medical vaccine portal for managing health requirements. All information you may have submitted through TMS in the past has been transitioned into [Health On Track](#).
- Health On Track and [Workday Learning](#) implementations are aligned to ensure a smooth transition from TMS.

Questions?

For questions about Health On Track features, please contact the Campus Health Systems team at Campus.Health.Systems@yale.edu.

MAPS Updates/March 2024-July 2024

The latest MAPS update took place on June 13th, 2024. The updates were:

- The inclusion of custom antibody only protocols in MAPS
- The hazardous agents building block redesign**

***Note that the hazardous agents building block redesign will require researchers to update these building block(s) when a modification or protocol renewal is initiated. Please reach out to your Research Liaison if any questions.*

Policy Updates/March 2024-July 2024

Administration of Experimental Agents

- Under the “Vehicles” section of the document, the final concentration was changed to not exceed 10%, citing the paper “[Nonclinical Vehicle Use in Studies by Multiple Routes in Multiple Species.](#)”
- The administration of compounds to laboratory animals is frequently a component of experimental design. To optimize delivery of the agent to the animal and minimize potential adverse reactions, careful planning must first occur.
- Consideration should be given to the route and volume of administration, site of delivery, pH of the substance and the frequency of dosing.

Environmental Enrichment – Zebrafish

- This is a new document of the types of enrichment that have shown to positively impact the fish.
- Zebrafish prefer housing conditions that resemble their natural environment and promote their preferences for social grouping. Studies have found that group-housed zebrafish prefer enriched environments over barren conditions and prefer moving and dynamic stimuli (e.g., social housing, live food) over static and inanimate stimuli (e.g., artificial plants).
- Unless scientifically justified and approved in an IACUC protocol, zebrafish must be provided with enrichment from at least two of the categories listed below when housed for at 7 days or more.
 - Social housing
 - Live food
 - Brine shrimp – provided a minimum of 5 times per week
 - Rotifers
 - Complex environment
 - Artificial plants
 - Substrate or picture of substrate on tank bottom (gravel, sand, marbles)
 - Shelter (PVC pipe)
 - Mirrored tape on tank wall

Environmental Enrichment-Xenopus

- This is a new document of the types of enrichment that have shown to positively impact the frogs.

- Data thus far has shown that enrichment can limit fighting and cannibalism, as well as optimizing welfare, general health, and fecundity.
- Xenopus are a solitary species; therefore social housing is not required but may be considered.
- Caution is advised when using smaller forms of enrichment, such as small pebbles or small parts of plastic plants, as they may be consumed and pose a risk to Xenopus health.
- Unless scientifically justified and approved by the IACUC, Xenopus must be provided at least one type of enrichment from the list below when housed for more than 2 weeks.
 - Shelter (e.g., sinkable PVC pipe or clay pots; artificial pads or floating surfaces)
 - Plastic plants
 - Ecologically relevant tank background

[Animal Acquisition](#)

- Animals acquired from either an approved commercial vendor or a non-approved vendor/institution must be processed through the Yale Animal Resources Center (YARC) business office following appropriate YARC procedures.
- Under the “Procurement Requirements” section, the following statements were added:
 - In special cases, animals may be procured from unconventional sources but must be approved in advance by the IACUC and clinical veterinarians.
 - At the discretion of the IACUC or Attending Veterinarian, a vendor site visit may be required.

[Animal Acclimation and Habituation](#)

- New animals should be given a period of time for physiologic, behavioral, and nutritional acclimation before their use. The length of this acclimation period will depend on the type and duration of animal transportation, the species, and the intended use of the animals ([Guide](#) p. 111).
- Habituating animals to routine husbandry or experimental procedures should be encouraged whenever possible.
- Acclimation should occur in a single facility.
- The following statement was added to the “Institutional Policy” section:

- If internal relocation by vehicle transport is necessary, it will be under veterinary discretion if and how long acclimation is required.

As always, please contact [OARS](#) with any questions, suggestions, or concerns.

~OARS Team