



CM SOP #214 – Medical Records for Non-USDA Covered Species

Original release date: 06/12/2017 Version: 4 Date last revised: 03/16/2026

I. Purpose & Scope

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) establishes requirements for the creation, maintenance, and management of medical and experimental records for animals used in research and teaching that are not covered by the USDA. Accurate, complete, and accessible documentation is essential to ensure appropriate veterinary care, maintain regulatory compliance, and support the integrity and reproducibility of research activities.

This SOP applies to:

- All animals housed within Comparative Medicine (CM) managed vivaria
- Animals housed in satellite (Principal Investigator–managed) housing facilities
- All CM personnel and research personnel listed on approved IACUC protocols

This SOP describes requirements for:

- Medical and clinical documentation
- Experimental and procedural recordkeeping
- Responsibilities for maintaining records
- Documentation of animal health concerns and treatments
- Record storage and retention

II. Roles & Responsibilities

Comparative Medicine Staff

- Maintaining room logbooks and associated documentation within animal housing areas.
- Recording and reporting animal health concerns observed during routine husbandry or monitoring.
- Flagging cages or tanks requiring veterinary evaluation using appropriate cage card indicators.
- Documenting treatments and clinical observations when directed by veterinary staff.
- Reviewing room logs for completeness and legibility.
- Reporting deficiencies in documentation or compliance concerns to supervisory personnel.

Research Staff, Students, Visitors

- Documenting all experimental procedures, anesthesia, surgery, post-procedural monitoring, and treatments required by the approved protocol.
- Ensuring animals are monitored and observations are recorded at the intervals specified in the protocol.
- Maintaining accurate experimental and clinical records in accordance with institutional policy.
- Promptly documenting observations of animal illness, injury, pain, or distress.



- Ensuring records remain accessible for review by CM veterinary staff and IACUC personnel.
- Ensuring compliance with IACUC Policy 10.4.5 – Recordkeeping Requirements for Research Personnel.

CM Management

- Ensuring implementation of this SOP within CM-managed facilities.
- Communicating documentation deficiencies or non-compliance to research personnel and the PI.
- Ensuring training on medical recordkeeping procedures is provided and documented.
- Ensuring required documentation forms and cage cards are available in all housing areas.

CM Director and AV

- Establishing standards for medical documentation and veterinary recordkeeping.
- Providing guidance and training on medical recordkeeping requirements.
- Reviewing medical records and treatment documentation when necessary.
- Prescribing, modifying, or discontinuing treatments as clinically appropriate.
- Ensuring veterinary evaluations and treatment recommendations are appropriately documented.
- *Note: The Attending Veterinarian and designated veterinary staff have the authority to initiate treatment, provide clinical recommendations, or require intervention when animal health or welfare concerns are identified. Such actions will be documented in the medical record and communicated to the research team and Principal Investigator as appropriate.*

III. General Notes & Definitions

1. Non-USDA-Covered Species

- Animals used in research, testing, experimentation, or teaching that are not regulated under the USDA Animal Welfare Act (AWA).
- These include:
 - purpose-bred rats (*Rattus* spp.),
 - purpose-bred mice (*Mus* spp.),
 - birds bred for research,
 - cold-blooded vertebrates such as fish, amphibians, and reptiles, and
 - invertebrate species.
- Although these species are not regulated by the USDA, their care and use at this institution are subject to IACUC oversight and institutional policies governing the humane care and use of animals in research and teaching.

2. Medical Records

Animal medical records include any documentation related to:

- Animal health observations
- Veterinary examinations
- Treatments or medications
- Surgical or anesthetic procedures
- Post-operative monitoring
- Clinical progress notes



- Necropsy findings
- Experimental procedures impacting animal welfare

Medical records are considered official regulatory documents and must be maintained in a complete, accurate, and auditable manner.

3. Documentation Standards

All entries must:

- Be recorded in permanent ink
- Include date and initials or signature
- Be legible and written clearly
- Be accurate, factual, and concise
- Be recorded at or near the time of observation or procedure

Documentation should avoid:

- a. Personal opinions
- b. Unsupported diagnoses
- c. Non-relevant commentary
- d. Only veterinary staff may record formal medical diagnoses.

Timeliness of Documentation

- a. Entries must be made at the time the observation, procedure, or treatment occurs, or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter.
- b. Delayed documentation should be clearly identified and must reflect the date and time the event actually occurred.
- c. Retrospective entries must be labeled as such.

4. Corrections to Records

Errors in documentation must be corrected by:

- Drawing a single line through the incorrect entry
- Initialing and dating the correction
- Ensuring the original entry remains legible
- Correction fluid or erasing entries is not permitted.

5. Acceptable Abbreviations

Only abbreviations listed in Appendix A: Approved Medical Abbreviations may be used.

IV. Materials & Equipment

The following materials must be available within animal housing areas:

- Room logbooks
- Daily Progress Notes forms
- Treatment labels or stickers
- Anesthetic and surgical record forms
- Color-coded cage cards
- Cage or tank identification cards

Comparative Medicine Forms

- Rodent Individual Anesthetic/Surgical Record
- Rodent Group Anesthetic/Surgical Record

V. Procedure

A. Animal Identification

- Animals must be identifiable either:



- Individually, or
- At the primary enclosure level (cage or tank)
- Acceptable identification methods include:
 - Ear tags
 - Ear punches
 - Microchips
 - Natural markings
 - Sex and distinguishing physical features
 - Research-specific identifiers
- When animals are identified at the enclosure level, the medical record must include:
 - Unique cage or tank identifier
 - Rack or tank location
 - IACUC protocol number

B. Cage or Tank Cards

- Cage/tank cards must include, at minimum:
 - IACUC protocol number
 - Principal Investigator name
 - Species and strain/stock
 - Source of animals
 - Date of arrival or date of birth
- CM provides cage cards for animals housed in CM-managed vivaria.
- PIs are responsible for cage card documentation in satellite housing facilities.
- If investigators utilize laboratory-specific cage cards, CM cage cards must remain present and visible.

C. Documentation of Animal Arrival or Colony Events

- Animal arrival, births, weaning, or transfers must be documented in:
 - Room progress notes, or
 - Institutional colony management systems when applicable.

D. Reporting Health Concerns

- When an animal health concern is identified:
 - The observer must document the concern in *Daily Progress Notes*.
 - The cage must be flagged with a 'Health Concern Evaluation Requested' card.
- Notification must be sent to:
 - Research personnel
 - Principal Investigator
 - CM operations staff
 - Veterinary staff
- *Note: The presence of a color-coded cage card indicating a health concern, treatment, monitoring requirement, or post-procedural status must correspond to a documented entry in the room logbook or medical record. Conversely, documented health concerns or treatments must be reflected by the appropriate cage card indicator when applicable.*

E. Veterinary Evaluation and Treatment

- Veterinary staff evaluate the animal and, if warranted, creates a case number, records it on the cage card, and creates a corresponding CM Form 003 'Health Concern Progress Notes' with:
 - Case ID (created by vet staff)
 - Principal Investigator



- IACUC Protocol Number
- Animal ID (if applicable)
- History and presentation
- Plan for treatment
- Any correspondence with research staff
- Treatment documentation must include:
 - Drug or compound name
 - Dose (mg/kg or concentration)
 - Volume to be administered
 - Route of administration
 - Frequency
 - Duration of treatment
- Once treatment instructions are recorded, veterinary staff adjust the cage flag to indicate evaluation completion.

F. Treatment Administration

- All treatments must be documented at the time they are administered and include:
 - Date
 - Time (or AM/PM)
 - Initials of person administering treatment
 - Dose and route of administration
- Treatment labels may be used for extended treatment regimens.

G. Verbal Veterinary Orders

If treatment instructions are given verbally:

- The recipient must immediately document the instructions in the medical record.
- The entry must include date, time, and initials.
- The entry should state "Per veterinarian or CVT instructions."

H. Case Closure

- The final disposition of the animal must be documented, including:
 - Resolution of the medical condition
 - Euthanasia as a humane endpoint
 - Euthanasia as an experimental endpoint
- If necropsy is performed, the necropsy report must be attached to the record.

I. Record Maintenance and Retention

- Active medical records must remain accessible within the animal facility during the period in which animals are actively monitored or treated.
 - Examples include:
 - (i) Post-operative monitoring records
 - (ii) Ongoing treatment documentation
 - (iii) Clinical progress notes
 - Records may be archived periodically; however, recent records should remain available in room logbooks for operational reference
- All animal medical and experimental records must be retained according to institutional record retention policies and must be made available to:
 - Veterinary staff
 - IACUC personnel
 - Institutional oversight officials
- CM Form 002: *Progress Notes* are established for each new IACUC protocol and kept in the room logbook



- Every 6 months, or at the end of a study, progress notes are transferred to the relevant storage location.
- Animal medical and procedural records may be periodically reviewed by CM staff or IACUC representatives to ensure completeness, accuracy, and compliance with institutional policies and regulatory requirements.

VI. Health & Safety

Cage cards identifying hazards must be used when animals are exposed to hazardous agents, including:

- Biohazards
- Chemical hazards
- Experimental restrictions affecting animal care.

VII. References & Attachments

- *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals.*
- IACUC Policy 10.4.5 — Recordkeeping Requirements for Research Personnel
- IACUC Policy 10.4.6 — Anesthesia, Surgery and Analgesia
- SOP202 — Rodent Health Monitoring and Reporting
- SOP205 — Aquatic Turtle Health Monitoring and Reporting
- SOP506 — Aquatic Salamander Husbandry and Care
- Relevant SOPs of Satellite (PI-managed) Facilities
- Color-coded cage flags:

Card	Color	Purpose
Dropped Mouse	Green	Indicates an animal found outside the cage
Health Concern Evaluation Requested	Red	Veterinary evaluation requested
Health Concern – Monitor	Red	Monitoring required
Health Treatment – Refer to Log Book	Red	Treatment in progress
Biohazard	Orange	Biohazard designation
Chemical Hazard	Blue	Chemical hazard
Food/Water Restriction	Yellow	Experimental restriction
Holding Protocol	Purple	Temporary holding
Post-Surgical Animals	Red	Post-operative monitoring
Transfer Request	Pink	Cage relocation
Valuable strain	Gold	Special research value

Note: Color-coded cage cards indicating health concerns, monitoring, treatments, or hazards should be removed once the condition has resolved and the medical record reflects case closure, or when the cage is no longer considered hazardous.

VIII. Revision History

Revision Date	Revision Number	Summary of Changes
03/25/2023	2	Removed SOAP method; added CM forms and IACUC Policy; minor correction of duties
03/16/2026	3	Updated formatting, made ADA compliant, refined wording, updated applicable forms



FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

Comparative Medicine

Division of Research

CM SOP #214.4

Effective date: 4/1/2026

Approved by: Nicole Compo, DVM, DVSc, DACLAM