

**THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE**  
**ANIMAL CARE AND ETHICS COMMITTEE**  
**CARE OF CHRONICALLY INSTRUMENTED ANIMALS**

**1. Pre-operative Assessment**

During the acclimatisation period prior to surgery (usually 7-10 days), the animal's normal behaviour and condition should be determined. This will assist in the assessment of the animal during the post-operative period.

The animal's well being should be monitored **closely** during the acclimatisation period. If problems are detected during this time, **it is better to exclude that animal from surgery.**

**2. Monitoring Well-being**

Following surgery, the animal must be monitored each day, including weekends and holidays. Monitoring must be performed by a person who is competent to recognise abnormalities.

Monitoring criteria should include, where appropriate, alertness, posture, body temperature, appearance of surgical site, food and water consumption, urine and faecal outputs. Other criteria may be necessary depending on the nature of the surgery and the experiment. Detection of any abnormality requires closer assessment of the animal's clinical condition.

**3. Out of hours contact numbers**

Emergency contact numbers of all persons involved in the project must be made available to the animal house staff. Contact must be available 24 hours per day.

**4. Absence of an investigator**

If the Chief Investigator (CI) or the responsible investigator will be absent or unable to respond to after hours calls, it is the responsibility of the CI to arrange for an alternate contact person(s) and provide the emergency telephone numbers for that person(s). This information must be provided the staff of the Animal Facility.

**5. Out of hours calls**

If an animal is found in need of attention out of hours, the contact investigator must be notified using the number provided. In the event that no one from the research team can be contacted to attend the animal, the "On Duty" Veterinarian must be notified who will then have the responsibility for the decision about the animal's future. In all cases the decision will be based on ensuring the welfare of the animal.

**6. For instrumented pregnant sheep - Management of labour**

Where ewes with instrumented foetuses are approaching labour, the "Guidelines for the monitoring of pregnant ewes with catheterised foetuses near term" must be followed. These guidelines apply equally where premature labour occurs. If labour is not required for part of the experiment, the ewe and foetus should be euthanased before day 142 of pregnancy.

**7. Reporting of Incidents**

If an animal dies unexpectedly, or (in the case of instrumented pregnant sheep) if lambs are born dead or die soon after birth, the occurrence must be reported to the staff of the Animal Facility and to the Animal Care and Ethics Committee (ACEC). The report to the ACEC of an unexpected death should include a report of an autopsy performed by the University Veterinarian or a person approved by the Animal Care and Ethics Committee.

## **8. Further details**

Further details of an Investigator's responsibilities regarding the care of chronically instrumented animals are contained in the NHMRC "Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes" (1997):

- Post-operative care (clauses 3.3.32 - 3.3.37)
- Implanted devices (clause 3.3.38)

Adapted from guidelines prepared by:  
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