

**MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL (MGH)
INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE (IACUC)**

EMERGENCIES ARISING IN ANIMAL FACILITIES

Emergencies that represent an immediate threat to personnel and laboratory animals may occur in animal facilities. A location specific Emergency Response Plan (ERP) has been generated for all approved animal housing locations and has been approved by the IACUC. Copies are also maintained on file and distributed to the research community by the [MGH Research Safety Manual](#). This policy provides summary of those plans describing the steps to be taken if such an emergency occurs. For any emergency, the specific ERP should be referenced. The Director of CCM and the Facility Manager in whose area the emergency occurs must be notified as soon as possible and responses coordinated with other MGH departments. Each emergency and its effects must be documented by the responsible department or laboratory in a formal Emergency Incident Report (EIR), provided to the IACUC, as soon as possible after the event.

Electrical Power Failure and Environmental Excursions

When a power outage occurs, the expected duration of the outage must be determined. If power is disrupted for only a few hours and if outside weather conditions allow, animals may be left in place while environmental conditions such as temperature and humidity are monitored on a frequent basis. Animal room doors may be propped open to improve circulation during this interruption if no hazardous materials are present in the affected rooms.

The maximum time environmental conditions may be outside acceptable ranges for animal rooms are listed below:

Species	Temperature (°F)	Humidity (%RH)	Max time allowed
Rodents	<65 or >85	<20 or >85	4 hours
Rabbits	<50 or >80	< 30 or >75	
Dogs, Livestock	<45 or >85	<30 or >75	
Nonhuman Primates	<60 or >80	<30 or >75	

If power will not likely be restored within several hours or if the room environment continues to deteriorate (e.g., too hot, too cold, too humid), B&G should be made aware of the situation in order to provide ancillary support while animals remain in the room in their cages. Such support may consist of temporary emergency power or heating, cooling, forced ventilation, humidification, dehumidification, etc., using portable equipment.

If these actions are not successful in returning the room environment into the acceptable ranges or if the power failure is expected to last more than several days, animals may be transferred to other facilities that provide an adequate environment.

CCM will consult with RSMG, B&G, and affected investigators to determine possible options or transfer scenarios.

Fire, Smoke, Flooding

Reasonable efforts should be made to protect animal rooms from these emergencies after P&S is notified and personnel are safe and protected. Such steps may consist of using fire extinguishers for small fires, making sure fire doors are closed, and diverting water from seeping into animal facilities. Animals must be secured (left in their cages) and handled as described in the applicable Emergency Response Plan until the emergency is declared under control by P&S or outside emergency responders.

Hazardous Material Exposures

If there is release of infectious, chemical, or radioactive material into the environment within or adjacent to an animal facility, P&S must be notified immediately. The response to such a release will be coordinated between P&S, B&G, and Environmental Health and Safety. Determination of appropriate action items involving laboratory animals will also include the IACUC and CCM Veterinary staff.

[Most recently revised May 25, 2014]