**Purpose of Policy:** The purpose of this policy is to ensure the well-being of any animal undergoing a surgical procedure or anesthesia without surgery at the time of an emergency building evacuation by providing guidelines for investigators to consider so that no animal suffers needlessly as a result of the emergency.

**Policy Information:** It is possible that an emergency building evacuation due to a natural disaster, fire, gas leak, chemical spill or bomb threat, may be required for safety reasons at a time when a surgical procedure is being performed on an animal. It may not be known if the operating personnel can return to the animal before it recovers from anesthesia or if the personnel can return at all; nor might there be time to finish the procedure or close an incision prior to evacuation. Therefore, the following factors should be assessed when considering if animal euthanasia is appropriate.

- Will the animal experience severe pain or distress or risk injuring itself if it recovers from anesthesia unattended?
- Can the animal be salvaged for research if the surgery is interrupted?
- Will the animal have a reasonable chance of survival if left unattended?

**Suggested courses of action:**

- An animal with an open thorax or abdomen should be humanely euthanized before the surgical personnel leave the room.
- An animal with a simple skin incision that does not penetrate the thorax or abdomen or an animal with the skull exposed can be removed from gas anesthesia and extubated if necessary. If time permits, the incision can be rapidly closed with staples. If not, the animal can be placed in its transport cage to recover while personnel leave the building. These incisions can be closed later.
- An animal with a craniotomy should either have skin apposed over brain tissue or should be euthanized before operating staff exit the area.
- Other procedures, among them the following, must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis:
  - laparoscopic procedures in which the abdomen is penetrated but not open
  - orthopedic procedures in which bone is exposed
  - intra-arterial cannulation procedures