

TITLE:	Emergency Evacuation during Surgery or General Anesthesia
Policy Number:	2014-012
Responsible Department:	Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
Policy Contact:	IACUCOffice@westernu.edu
Approval Date:	7/9/14
Reviewed:	9/13/17; 2/12/2020
Revised:	9/13/17 (revised when to leave area if euthanasia cannot be done immediately); 2/12/2020 (2. Step 2: changed “on a heating pad” to “ensuring heat support”; 3. Step 2: added “secure the animal as possible” & euthanasia solution “if immediately available”).

Purpose of Policy: To provide investigators with guidelines for handling animals undergoing general anesthesia, with or without surgery, during an emergency. The goal is to minimize or avoid animal pain and distress while ensuring human safety and wellbeing.

Policy Information: Different types of emergency (e.g., natural disaster, fire, gas leak, chemical spill, active shooter or bomb threat) require different responses, i.e., abandon the building immediately or shelter in place. **Whenever possible, confirm that the emergency is real and not just a test before following the steps below.**

Ensuring the safety of all personnel is always the highest priority.

Whenever an anesthetic or surgical procedure is in progress, the following actions should be taken, depending on the circumstances. The three scenarios below assume that the appropriate response to the declared emergency is to abandon the building as quickly as possible:

1. **The animal has not yet been anesthetized:**
 - *Place the animal back in its enclosure and leave the room or building immediately.*
2. **The animal has been anesthetized, but no incisions have been made:**
 - *Step 1: Turn vaporizer and/or oxygen off (applicable only to gas anesthesia), extubate the animal (if applicable). If injectable anesthesia was used, skip to next step.*
 - *Step 2: Place the animal back in its enclosure, ensuring heat support, and leave the room or building immediately.*
3. **The animal already has been fully anesthetized and is undergoing surgery (minor or major):**
 - *Step 1: Turn vaporizer and/or oxygen off (if applicable).*
 - *Step 2: If time permits, rapidly euthanize the animal using a physical method (cervical dislocation, decapitation or bilateral thoracotomy for rodents and shrews) or by*

intracardiac or intraperitoneal injection of euthanasia solution, if immediately available, and leave the room or building immediately. If euthanasia cannot be accomplished immediately, secure the animal as possible and leave the area immediately along with all involved personnel.