



POLICY

TITLE:	Prolonged Physical Restraint of Unanesthetized Animals
Policy Number:	2014-026
Responsible Department:	Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
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Revised:	8/14/17; 4/8/2020 (Added gradually acclimate to restraint using positive reward; remove if unresolved distress; notify AV if injury during acclimation)

Purpose of Policy: To ensure that physical restraint of conscious animals for prolonged periods is scientifically justified and is done in as humane a manner as possible.

Policy Information: The criteria for prolonged restraint vary with the animal species and type of restraint but, for the purposes of this policy, a period in excess of 30 minutes will be considered prolonged restraint.

The National Research Council's [Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals](#) and the Federation of Animal Science Societies [Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching](#) state that: 1) prolonged restraint must be specifically approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC); 2) the period of restraint of any animal should be kept to the minimum necessary to achieve the research or teaching goals; 3) animals should be adapted to the restraint device; 4) animals that do not adapt should be removed from the study; 5) restraint devices should not be considered normal methods of housing; 6) electrical immobilization must not be used as a method of restraint; 7) restrained animals should be observed at appropriate intervals; and 8) appropriate veterinary care must be provided.

Prolonged restraint of conscious animals can be stressful and has the potential to physically harm the animal and, in some cases, the handler. However, prolonged restraint might be necessary either to achieve a valid scientific or teaching objective or to ensure the safety of the animal and the handler. Nevertheless, any such procedure requires rigorous scientific justification and prior approval by the IACUC. The animal handler must be well trained in the procedure to minimize risk both to the animal and the handler. Convenience alone will not be accepted as justification for such restraint. It is recommended that, where possible, animals be gradually acclimated to the restraint using positive rewards to solicit animal cooperation prior to data collection. Animals exhibiting signs of distress that do not resolve over time or struggle to the point where injury is likely should be removed from the restraint, allowed to rest, and re-acclimated to the device if feasible. Animals that repeatedly become

distressed or actually injure themselves must be brought to the attention of the Attending Veterinarian or removed from the project.

Larger farm animals may exhibit aggressive behaviors that may put themselves and the handlers at risk. Hobbles, squeeze chutes and stanchions may be used to minimize these risks. However, the equipment used must be appropriate for the species and procedure and be functioning properly. WesternU's IACUC uses the following guidelines set forth in the *Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching* cited above and summarized here:

- Nonslip flooring should be provided if possible as repeated small rapid slips may cause agitation.
- Avoid sudden jerky motions of people and equipment.
- Avoid unnecessary noise.
- Use a calm, confident tone of voice.
- The restraint should be sufficiently tight that the animal is duly supported but not so tight that it may lead to pain or respiratory impairment.
- Blocking vision with a blindfold may keep cattle and horses calmer.
- Fully support the body of an animal raised off of the ground (e.g. sling).
- Applying even pressure over a wide area of the body may help calm the animal.

Investigators are referred to the *Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching* for species-specific recommendations for large animals.

Training: Anyone using a prolonged restraint procedure must be properly trained in its use and demonstrate proficiency to another properly trained person.

The Attending Veterinarian may terminate the restraint procedures at any time if there are any signs of complications that may compromise the animals' health or if the risk to the handlers outweighs the objectives of the procedure.