



**Stanford University School of Medicine
Department of Comparative Medicine/Veterinary Service Center**

This VSC Policy has been written in order to clearly communicate current requirement to facility users. Questions should be directed to Dr. Linda Cork, 723-2991.

**POLICY FOR PREVENTING INFECTIONS IN THE VETERINARY SERVICE CENTER
Veterinary Service Center Faculty Advisory Committee**

Preventing the spread of infections in an animal facility is an essential component of protecting animal health, in preventing problems that can affect research and in minimizing expenses to investigators (per diems). This is especially true for rodents because the VSC routinely monitors for specific viruses, bacteria and parasites. Even when rodent infections are subclinical, their impact on research can be devastating. When outbreaks occur, testing efforts must be increased (increasing users' costs), animals must be culled or quarantined and research may be delayed or halted completely.

Preventing the spread of these pathogens depends on the cooperation of everyone who works with rodents – VSC husbandry staff and non-VSC research personnel. Everyone who works with animals must use proper techniques: when handling animals and disinfecting equipment, by opening cages only in safety cabinets or hoods, by using personal protective clothing and equipment, and when moving between animal rooms remembering to always work with the “clean” animals first. Failure to follow these disease prevention procedures impacts not only the research efforts of the specific offender but also of the entire research community.

When infections are detected, the VSC notifies all PIs that house animals in the affected room and relies upon the PIs to inform their laboratory personnel of the infection and to ensure that their personnel abide by the precautions outlined in the notice. In addition, notices are posted on the door of the affected room identifying the pathogen detected and the requirements to use personal protective clothing and equipment.

The VSC uses appropriate training and disciplinary actions with VSC employees who fail to comply with appropriate procedures; this will continue to ensure that appropriate standards are met. Previously, the VSC has relied on training, persuasion, and appeals to good citizenship to non-VSC research personnel who failed to comply with appropriate disease prevention strategies. Effective immediately, the VSC will implement the following policy regarding non-VSC research personnel:

Non-VSC research personnel who fail to abide by quarantine procedures, who fail to use appropriate infection control procedures, or who engage in other activities which could foster the spread of disease will receive an initial warning and be reminded of proper procedures: their supervisor will be notified of this initial warning. If there is a second violation, the employee's supervisor, department chair, and the Senior Associate Dean of Research for the School of Medicine will be notified of their failure to follow appropriate procedures as a performance issue and the individual will be excluded from the animal facility effective immediately to avoid jeopardizing other faculty members' research. Separately, and in addition to any discipline that may be imposed by the individual's supervisor, the individual's exclusion from the animal facility will remain in effect until the VSC is satisfied that the individual can conduct themselves in a manner which does not jeopardize animal health and research. VSC may require that the individual complete additional laboratory safety training as specified by VSC and that he/she affirmatively represents to VSC's satisfaction that he/she understands and will abide by quarantine procedures in the future. In the event of a 3rd violation, effective immediately the individual will be permanently excluded from the animal facility. VSC will notify the employee's supervisor, department chair, and the Senior Associate Dean of Research for the School of Medicine, who may take appropriate disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.