



EMORY
UNIVERSITY

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
Policy, Guidelines, and
Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Postmortem Sharing of Animal Tissues

380.1 Purpose

This document establishes policy and provides procedures for using animal tissues postmortem from an animal euthanized following the AMVA¹ guidelines as part of an Emory University IACUC approved protocol. The use of postmortem animal tissues encompasses sharing of tissues with other investigators.

380.2 Scope

This policy is applicable to researchers responsible for conducting research, teaching, training, breeding, and related activities with vertebrate animals in the Division of Animal Resources from the School of Medicine of Emory University.

This policy is not applicable to researchers requesting tissue from the Yerkes National Primate Research Center. Yerkes has a separate process in place and the link to email about specimen requests and procurement of biological samples can be found at:

<http://www.yerkes.emory.edu/research/Scientific%20Resources.html>.

Postmortem tissues from non-infectious/non-hazardous animals will not require IACUC or biosafety approval. This does not apply to tissues from non-human primates.

380.3 Background

The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) addresses the use of dead animals or parts of animals in its FAQs (Question 3) for applicability of the PHS Policy:

The use of dead animals or parts of animals is not covered by the PHS Policy unless the activity involves (1) killing animals for the purpose of obtaining or using their tissues or other materials, or (2) project-specific antemortem manipulation of animals prior to killing them. If either circumstance is applicable to the acquisition of dead animals, body parts or tissues, prior IACUC protocol review and approval are required.²

The Animal Welfare Act Regulations (AWAR) do not have a specific reference to tissue sharing or use of animal tissues or parts postmortem. However, the AWAR defines “Animal” as follows:

*(g) The term “animal” means any live or dead dog, cat, monkey (nonhuman primate mammal), guinea pig, hamster, rabbit, or such other warm-blooded animal, as the Secretary may determine is being used, or is intended for use, for research, testing, experimentation, or exhibition purposes, or as a pet; but such term excludes (1) birds, rats of the genus *Rattus*, and mice of the genus *Mus*, bred for use in research, (2) horses not used for research purposes, and (3) other farm animals, such as, but not limited to livestock or poultry, used or intended for use as food or fiber, or livestock or poultry used or intended for use for improving animal nutrition, breeding, management, or production efficiency, or for improving the quality of food or fiber.³*

This policy supports Emory University IACUC’s commitment to the 3Rs alternatives by reducing the number of animals used in research. The ARENA OLAW IACUC Guidebook lists “*animals euthanized by one investigator used for tissue needed by another*” as an example for maximizing the use of animals in research.⁴

380.4 Responsibility

380.4.1 Principal Investigator (PI): The PI is responsible for preparing and submitting applications; making modifications in applications to secure IACUC approval; ensuring adherence to approved protocols; ensuring humane care and use of animals; ensuring that all personnel have completed required training; and reporting any adverse events to the IACUC.

380.4.2 Requesting Principal Investigator: The requesting investigator is responsible for ensuring that the animal tissues or materials being requested have been reviewed and approved by the Environmental Health and Safety Office (biosafe@emory.edu).

380.4.3 Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC): The IACUC is responsible for overseeing implementation of and ensuring compliance with this policy.

380.4.4 Emory University School of Medicine Division of Animal Resources (EU DAR): EU DAR can facilitate the collection and transfer of animal tissues postmortem between principal investigators and requesting principal investigators, if necessary.

380.5 Definitions

Tissue: means any part of a vertebrate animal, including tissue, blood or other bodily fluids, organ, and carcass, that contributes to the animal’s homeostasis when the animal is alive.

380.6 Procedures

380.6.1 When vertebrate animals are euthanized for the purpose of obtaining tissue or are involved in a project-specific antemortem manipulations, an approved IACUC protocol is required.

380.6.2 IACUC approval is not required for postmortem tissue sharing when the following criteria are met:

- Tissue is collected postmortem from animals that have been humanely euthanized under an approved IACUC protocol; and

- The collection of tissue does not alter the approved primary protocol procedures in any way; and
- There are no antemortem manipulations or changes in the primary protocol in anticipation of the secondary postmortem use (changes in the primary protocol must be addressed as an amendment to the original protocol or with a revised application).

380.6.3 Investigators sharing and receiving tissues from animals infected with biohazardous agents or treated with radioisotopes must obtain appropriate approvals from the Environmental Health and Safety Office before any transfer occurs.

- Tissues which may pose a biohazard risk (including but not limited to infectious agents, genetically modified animals, carcinogens, radioisotopes, or toxic substances) cannot be shared without biosafety training and approval.

380.6.4 Upon request, the IACUC will issue a letter to verify the use of tissues collected postmortem from animals that have been humanely euthanized under an approved protocol, when a funding agency requires it as part of a grant application. Please contact the [IACUC Office](#).

380.6.5 Contact DAR if there are questions related to tissue sharing at darcust@emory.edu

380.7 References

1. Emory University Policy for Euthanasia, **AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals: 2020 Edition**. http://www.iacuc.emory.edu/documents/377_Euthanasia.pdf
2. OLAW FAQ Question A.3 [Does the PHS Policy apply to use of animal tissue or materials obtained from dead animals?](https://olaw.nih.gov/faqs/#/search/442/tissue) <https://olaw.nih.gov/faqs/#/search/442/tissue>
3. **United States., United States. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.** 2005. *Animal Welfare Act and Animal Welfare Regulations*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.
4. ARENA OLAW **Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee Guidebook**, 2nd Ed, 2002. C.2.a. Table A. Methods for Reduction of Numbers of Animals Used. <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/guidebook.pdf>

We thank Boston University's IACUC for making the policy [Postmortem Tissue Collection](#) available on their website.

380.8. Document Properties

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