

**Subject: Tail Clipping**

Source: CU Denver | Anschutz Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee  
Effective Date: 11/13/2023  
Replaces: 07/10/2023  
Applies to: Personnel involved in research or teaching studies involving animals  
Reference: Animal Welfare Act; PHS Policy on Humane Care & Use of Laboratory Animals; Guide for the Care & Use of Laboratory Animals



**Introduction**

The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) maintains oversight review for federally mandated rules and regulations with regard to animal research, ethics, misconduct and biomedical research for the University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus (CU Denver | Anschutz).

**Policy Statement**

This policy is intended to provide information on the requirements of tail clipping and to establish procedures to be followed.

- Tail clipping of rodents is often used to obtain tissue samples for analysis.
  - If a one-time sample of only 1 to 2 mm of tail tissue is needed, and the rodent is 21 days of age or less, then no anesthesia is required.
  - If greater than 2 mm of tail tissue (or repeated samples) are needed, or if the animal is 22 days of age or older, then anesthesia is required.
    - Post-procedural analgesics are also required in this latter case, unless adequate scientific justification for no analgesics is provided in their approved IACUC protocol.
- An alternative to the tail clip procedure is ear punch or the saliva swab method (Irwin *et al.*, (1996). Identification of transgenic mice by PCR analysis of saliva, please see Nature Biotechnology, 14(9): 1146-1148). This method is recommended when only small amounts of tissue are needed (i.e. for PCR analysis).
- Any deviation from the policy concerning tail clipping will be considered and reviewed by the IACUC on a case by case basis with supporting scientific justification.

Per regulatory requirements, failure to comply with this policy may result in notification of your funding agency (e.g. NIH) and regulatory agencies (e.g. USDA) that your research has violated federal and/or local policies regarding the humane use of animals. This notification may affect continuous funding of your animal-related research. Further, depending on the violation, you may be required to take additional training and/or your privilege to conduct animal research at CU Denver | Anschutz might be temporarily suspended or even completely revoked.