



Keeping Records for Experiments with Animals

1. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

Standard operating procedures should define how to carry out protocol-specified activities

SOP should be written in a chronological listing of action steps

A SOP should be included in any lab notebook

SOPs should be written to explain how procedures work

Any experimental details not in the protocol should be in the SOP

SOPs should be in the laboratory close to the animals and not in an office

Keeping SOP and a copy of the animal use protocol in the lab notebook is a good way to comply with federally required IACUC access to records

Animal procedure SOP should include:

- * Routine cleaning, maintenance, calibration and standardization of equipment
- * Actions to be taken in response to equipment problems
- * Definition of raw data and acronyms for data to be collected
- * Location of and retrieval of computerized or automated data
- * Health and safety precautions for the animals
- * Coding of study treatments and animals, including the use of data systems
- * Method for reagent preparation and storage

All deviations from SOPs should be documented in writing

2. Reagents and Solutions

All reagents and solutions in the laboratory areas shall be labeled to indicate identity, titer or concentration, storage requirements, and expiration date as defined by the Animal Welfare Act and Public Health Service Policy – no longer than 6 months. It is a good idea to keep a log of reagent preparation and storage conditions so expiration can be easily checked.

3. Experimental Records

Experimental Records are easily maintained with printed templates. Templates contain a blank for all required information so lab personnel are less likely to forget to record information.

Records/Templates should follow the animal use protocol and SOP

Records/Templates should be written in a chronological listing and include all action steps taken

Hand-recorded data must be recorded in ink and not with a pencil. Changes must not obscure the original entry and must be dated and signed together with a reason for the change.

The instrument and responsible person should be identified for automated data acquisition

Any deviations from the protocol or SOP should be documented

Records for each day or experimental test within a day should include:

- * Date
- * Time when experiments or procedures begin
- * Name of all participants or observers for any experiment or procedures
- * Numbers and ID information of all animals used for any experiment or procedures
- * Sequence of steps corresponding to SOP. Check boxes are useful.
- * Time when important steps in the procedure or experiment is conducted
- * Description of samples to be taken / samples collected. Check boxes are useful.
- * Description of compound dosage, route of administration, duration.
- * Observations, data or sample collected corresponding to SOP. Score boxes are especially useful for any steps involving criteria of animal behavior, chemical response, anesthesia, etc.