



<b>Name:</b>	<b>Policy for Reporting Animal Welfare Incidents at Saint Mary's University</b>
<b>Approving Authority:</b>	Vice President Academic and Research
<b>Approved:</b>	4-MAR-2022
<b>Responsible Office:</b>	Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, Animal Care Committee
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Associate Vice President Research
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## 1. Preamble

- 1.1 As a certified institution of the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC), Saint Mary's University (SMU) is required to have a policy for the reporting and escalation of animal welfare incidents, as outlined in the [CCAC Policy: Certification of Ethical Animal Care and Use Programs](#).
- 1.2 The Policy for Reporting Animal Welfare Incidents is ultimately the responsibility of the Vice President Academic and Research (VPAR). The VPAR has designated day-to-day responsibility for the Policy to the Associate Vice President Research (AVPR). The AVPR has authorized the SMU Animal Care Committee (ACC), and, in particular, the ACC Chair, ACC Coordinator and ACC Consulting Veterinarian to manage the reporting and resolution of animal welfare incidents, to review it annually, and make recommendations on any changes to the AVPR.

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to describe the process for reporting animal welfare incidents.

## 3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all animal users at Saint Mary's University who work with animals under an approved Animal Use Protocol.

#### 4. Definitions

ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE (ACC)	The local representative of the CCAC responsible for ensuring that all animals used in teaching, research or testing at SMU are treated ethically and in accordance with the Canadian Council on Animal Care's (CCAC) policies and guidelines.
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PI)	The faculty member who holds an approved Animal Use Protocol (AUP) and associated funding.
ANIMAL USER	Any faculty, staff, or student who use animals for research or teaching covered under CCAC mandate (for more information, see <a href="#">CCAC Policy: Requirement for submitting an animal protocol</a> ).
ANIMAL FACILITY MANAGER	Designated personnel who oversee animal facility activities and operations. SMU has an Animal Facility Manager (0.6FTE) who is responsible for the SMU Aquatic Research Facility. In some cases, a PI holds this role.
ANIMAL WELFARE INCIDENT	<p>The CCAC defines an animal welfare incident as “an event that leads to the unanticipated death of research, teaching or testing animals, or poses an immediate threat to animal health or welfare”. This can include, but is not limited to, the following situations associated with animal deaths or threats to health or welfare:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “a catastrophic failure of critical life-support system(s);</li><li>• “disregard of, or unintended failure to follow [approved] practices or procedures”;</li><li>• “significant and unanticipated morbidity or mortality unrelated to the above”; and</li><li>• “serious or repeated noncompliance with CCAC standards that leads to the suspension by the animal care committee or the institution of an animal-based activity that threatens animal health or welfare”.</li></ul> <p>An incident can be acute (e.g., over a few hours or days) or occur on a longer timescale (e.g., the length of the protocol).</p>
POPULATION	The total number of animals of a given species on an approved Animal Use Protocol (AUP).

## 5. Policy

- 5.1 An animal welfare incident is reportable to the ACC if:
- the health or welfare of  $\geq 20\%$  of the population is compromised in a manner not described and approved in the AUP;
  - morbidity or mortality is  $\geq 20\%$  of the population when no baseline morbidity or mortality is approved in the AUP, or if population morbidity or mortality is  $\geq 20\%$  above baseline mortality levels outlined, justified, and approved in the AUP.
- 5.2 An animal welfare incident must be reported to the ACC within 24 hours of an acute incident or when  $\geq 20\%$  of a population have health and welfare or mortality concerns beyond those described and approved in the AUP.
- 5.3 If an unexpected incident occurs that leads to significant unexpected morbidity or mortality, but is below the levels outlined in Section 5.1, it must be discussed with the ACC Coordinator and Consulting Veterinarian to determine if an incident report should be submitted.
- 5.4 Roles and Responsibilities
- 5.4.1 Principal Investigator (PI): is it the responsibility of the PI to report all animal welfare incidents to the ACC within 24 hours of an incident occurring.
- 5.4.2 Animal Care Committee (ACC): is it the responsibility of the ACC to monitor and ensure compliance of animal use and animal facilities, review submitted animal welfare incident reports at regularly scheduled meetings, and report incidents to the VPAR and/or AVPR and CCAC if mandatory.
- 5.4.3 VPAR and/or AVPR: it is the responsibility of the VPAR and/or AVPR to consult with the ACC if resolution of the incident cannot be reached.
- 5.5 Compliance
- 5.5.1 Failure of PIs to report animal welfare incidents is a serious breach of [Saint Mary's University Policy on Integrity in Research and Scholarship and Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Scholarly Misconduct](#). Suspected unreported incidents may be investigated according to the *Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Scholarly Misconduct* and, if found not to be in compliance, will face outcomes as described in the Policy.

## 6. Related Policies, Procedures & Documents

6.1 The procedure for reporting animal welfare incidents is as follows:

- a) The [SMU Animal Welfare Incident Report Form](#) is sent electronically to [animalcare@smu.ca](mailto:animalcare@smu.ca) and the Consulting Veterinarian by the PI within 24 hours of the acute incident or the point at which a longer incident reaches a reportable level (i.e.,  $\geq$  20% mortality or welfare/health concerns beyond that approved in an AUP).
- b) The Consulting Veterinarian will assess the urgency and impact of the incident and initiate actions as appropriate (i.e., medical care, procedures, etc.).
- c) The ACC Chair, Coordinator and Consulting Veterinarian will review information submitted by the PI, conduct further investigation to determine the cause of the incident if appropriate, and ensure compliance with SMU ACC and CCAC policies and guidelines.
- d) The ACC Chair, Coordinator and Consulting Veterinarian will determine whether the incident must be formally reported to the CCAC based on the CCAC Guidelines for Reportable Animal Welfare Incidents. The ACC Chair will report the incident to the CCAC and VPAR/AVPR within 10 days of the event.
- e) The ACC Chair, Coordinator and Consulting Veterinarian will collaborate with the PI and/or Animal Facility Manager to review protocols and mitigate occurrence.
- f) The PI and/or Animal Facility Manager will review AUPs, standards operating procedures (SOPs), the animal facility, and any other relevant animal care training material with animal users if needed.
- g) The ACC will review the full animal welfare incident report and resolution at the next regularly scheduled ACC meeting. As with all ACC matters, ACC members who are in conflict of interest must recuse themselves from discussion of the incident unless the ACC requires clarification on any part of the event.
- h) If resolution cannot be achieved by the ACC Chair in collaboration with the PI, the AVPR and/or VPAR will work in consultation with all parties to resolve the incident.

Related Policies:

[CCAC policy: Certification of ethical animal care and use programs](#)

[CCAC policy: Requirement for submitting an animal protocol](#)

[FAQ: Certification of ethical animal care and use programs](#)

[FAQ: CCAC reportable animal welfare incidents](#)

[Saint Marys University Policy on Integrity in Research and Scholarship and Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Scholarly Misconduct](#)