

**Colorado State University**  
**Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee**  
***Guideline on Environmental Enrichment***

It is the responsibility of the Colorado State University (CSU) Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) to ensure judicious and humane use of animals used in its teaching and research programs that is consistent with federal requirements\* and CSU's highest ethical standards.

The *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* recommends the use of environmental enrichment to enhance the physical and psychological well-being and to promote species-typical behavior in **ALL** laboratory animals. Public Health Service (PHS) Policy (II; IV, A,1) requires that institutions comply with the AWAR and the *Guide*.

CSU's environmental enrichment program is designed to provide appropriate housing, care, activities, and social interactions for research animals to promote their well-being while not compromising personnel safety, animal health and safety, or research goals. The IACUC views this as an important component of the routine animal care and use program. Environmental enrichment (EE) should therefore be provided to all laboratory animals as the default, and animals may only be exempted from the enrichment program with scientific justification (see below). CSU LAR has provided enrichment to most species for over a decade and has evolved a program to use consistent enrichment for each species that promotes natural behaviors inherent to that species. This practice takes into consideration that EE is a variable that may impact experimental outcomes.

Unless otherwise identified and approved by the IACUC the species below will receive species-specific enrichment which may include:

- Mice: compatible group housing, nesting material, huts
- Rats: compatible group housing, cardboard tubes
- Guinea Pigs: compatible group housing, hiding devices
- Hamsters: compatible group housing, extra bedding, nesting material
- Rabbits: resting or structural items, plastic or metal toys, food treats and nature sounds
- Ferrets: compatible group housing fleeces or blankets, resting or structural items, hiding devices, toys, tubes, food treats, and nature sounds
- Birds: resting or structural items, toys, grass hay, food treats, and nature sounds
- Dogs: compatible group housing, toys, food treats, rawhides, and nature sounds, social interaction and exercise as specified in [CSU IACUC Veterinary Care and Exercise Program for Dogs](#)
- Cats: compatible group housing, fleeces, or blankets, resting or structural items, toys with or without catnip, scratching devices, raised perches, food treats, and nature sounds
- Livestock species, deer, and horses: compatible group housing, toys, grooming devices, food treats, and nature sounds

- Frogs, mudpuppies, and fish: compatible group housing, hiding devices
- Bats: compatible group housing, roosting areas of various shapes and sizes

Animals may be exempted from the environmental enrichment program with approval by the IACUC for scientific reasons. Other forms of EE not listed above may also be substituted by investigators. LAR will continue to update EE provisions as new information becomes available on this topic.

EE may be limited with the authorization from the Attending Veterinarian, or their delegates, because of animal health or behavioral issues. The prescribing veterinarian must document this exemption in the protocol files and in the medical records if appropriate.

**\*Pertinent Regulations:**

Animal Welfare Act Regulations (AWAR) §3.8 and §3.81

The *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* pp. 36-38

Public Health Service (PHS) Policy (II;IV, A,1)