

COMPARATIVE MEDICINE  
LABORATORY ANIMAL FACILITIES  
  
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES  
FOR  
COLOR CODED PLASTIC TAGS

- 1.0 Purpose  
This procedure outlines a color coded plastic tag system which identifies individual animals or cages of animals which require veterinary services or special services. The system utilizes five colors of plastic tags.
- 2.0 Scope  
This procedure applies to all CMLAF and Principal Investigator personnel.
- 3.0 Procedure
- 3.1 Yellow Tag: Identifies an animal which has been reported on an Animal Report Form.
- A. Placed on Cage by: Caretakers, Investigator or research technician.
  - B. A veterinary technician will examine the animal the same day reported.
  - C. The veterinarian examines the animal within 24 hours.
  - D. If the veterinarian determines the animal should be treated they or a designated veterinary technician will notify the investigator.
  - E. The veterinary staff removes the yellow plastic tag and replaces it with a red plastic tag after the veterinarian examines the animal.
- OR
- F. The veterinary staff removes the yellow plastic tag after the veterinarian examines the animal and determines that the animal does not require treatment or further observation.
  - G. The veterinary staff contacts the person reporting the case and explains his/her findings or decision.
  - H. Only the CMLAF veterinary staff may remove a yellow plastic tag from an animal cage.
- 3.2 Red Tag: Identifies an animal currently under veterinary treatment or observation.
- A. Placed on cage by CMLAF Veterinary Staff ONLY.
  - B. CMLAF veterinary staff examines the animal as prescribed on daily clinical rounds, and administers treatment as needed. CMLAF veterinary staff maintains individual case records.
  - C. Only the CMLAF veterinary staff may remove a red plastic tag from an animal cage when the veterinarian has ended the clinical record.

- 3.3 Green Tag: Identifies there is a special request in the room for the animal.
  - A. Placed on cage by: CMLAF veterinary staff or investigator's staff.
  - B. CMLAF staff must read and follow instructions on Special Request posted in the room.
  - C. CMLAF staff or investigators or his/her staff may remove a green tag when the Special Request has been exercised.
- 3.4 Black tag: Identifies an animal which is being used as a sentinel for health surveillance program.
  - A. Placed on cage by: CMLAF veterinary staff.
  - B. CMLAF staff log and maintain records for all "black tag" animals.
  - C. Black tags may be removed by CMLAF staff only.
- 3.5 Blue Tags: Identifies an animal that is being monitored in the post-operative program.
  - A. Placed on cage by: CMLAF veterinary staff or investigator or his/her staff.
  - B. --Investigator must initiate a Post-Operative Report for all animals housed in the CMLAF. There are separate forms for rats and mice, frogs and USDA animals.  
--Veterinary staff examines the post-operative animal on daily rounds. CMLAF maintains individual case records. See SOP 2.C.3.  
--Investigators may discuss the post-operative plan and review CMLAF records with the veterinary staff.
  - C. Anesthesia/Operative Report must accompany all post operative reports on all USDA regulated animals.
- 3.6 White Tags: Identifies an animal that is "unassigned".
  - A. Placed on cage by: caretakers or veterinary staff.
  - B. CMLAF veterinary staff maintains a log of all unassigned animals.
  - C. White tags may be removed by CMLAF caretakers or veterinary staff when an animal is transferred to a PI's protocol.
- 3.7 Biohazard Tags (orange tag with black biohazard symbol): Identifies an animal that is part of a biohazard protocol.
  - A. Placed on cage by: caretakers, veterinary staff, or investigator.
  - B. Animal housing rooms containing animals with biohazard tags should have biohazard signs posted on the entrance door. The biohazard sign should state the nature of the biohazard and any precautions that should be taken to handle animals or bedding.
  - C. Biohazard tags may be removed by the investigator or LAF staff if the biohazard is no longer present.
- 3.8 Chemical Hazard Tags (white tags with chemical hazard symbol): Identifies an animal that is part of a chemical hazard protocol.
  - A. Placed on cage by: caretakers, veterinary staff, or investigator.
  - B. Animal housing rooms containing animals with chemical hazard tags should have chemical hazard signs posted on the entrance door. The chemical hazard sign should state the nature of the chemical hazard and any precautions that should be taken to handle

- animals or bedding.
- C. Chemical hazard tags may be removed by the investigator or LAF staff if the chemical hazard is no longer present.