

Frequency of Monitoring Rodent Traps

How often should vermin* traps (live trap or lethal) be checked by staff?

The *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (Guide)*, NRC 2011 indicates that pest control managed by the animal care and use program personnel should be designed to prevent, control, or eliminate the presence of or infestation by pests in the animal environment. The *Guide* states (pg. 74) that “If traps are used, methods should be humane; traps that catch pests alive require frequent observation and humane euthanasia after capture” and also notes (pg. 112) that “all animals should be observed for signs of illness, injury or abnormal behavior by a person trained to recognize such signs. As a rule, such observation should occur at least daily.” The *Guide* (pg. 105) further indicates that an adequate veterinary care program consists of assessment of animal well-being and effective management of pain and distress. The *Guidelines of the American Society of Mammalogists for the Use of Wild Mammals in Research***[†], an AAALAC International Reference Resource, indicate that lethal traps should result in a clean, effective kill and should be checked at least once a day, and in the event that an animal is still alive, it should be immediately dispatched in accordance with guidelines of the American Veterinary Medical Association.

In considering the information provided by the above references, the Council on Accreditation has determined that live mouse traps should be checked at least daily to prevent potential animal distress related to food or water deprivation. If the live trap provides food and water, then the IACUC should determine the appropriate frequency of checking traps. Alternatives to “sticky/adhesive” live board traps should be used for mice to avoid unnecessary animal distress as required by the *Guide* as part of a program of adequate veterinary care. Lethal traps (e.g., snap traps) should be checked daily so that in the event that a animal is still alive, it can be promptly euthanized. Council also considers that this guidance applies to all mice, be they laboratory or vermin mice.

*Excluding arthropods

** <https://www.mammalsociety.org/uploads/Sikes%20et%20al%202011.pdf>