

Policy: SC-36-100
Date: 6/9/2025
Enabled by: IACUC/AV/
ILAR
Supersedes: 4/1/2022

Title: Husbandry Care of Snakes

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the minimum standards of care for snakes.

II. Policy:

All units providing animal care for snakes must meet or exceed these minimum requirements based on the ILAR Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (*Guide*). Deviations or exceptions must be approved by the Attending Veterinarian and the IACUC.

III. Procedure:

Daily (365 days a year without exception):

- Observe each animal and check for health concerns (*Guide* pg. 112).
- Ensure adequate potable water is available (*Guide* pg. 65-68).
- Record sick and dead animals and report them to Campus Veterinary Services (CVS) or designated clinical veterinarian per standard operating procedure.
- Ensure appropriate lighting type is available and on an appropriate schedule.
 - For example: UVA/B lighting for some species
- Record minimum and maximum temperatures and humidity.
 - Temperature range for snakes is species dependent.
 - Humidity range for snakes is species dependent.
- Spot clean and change any excessively soiled or flooded enclosures (*Guide* pg. 70).
- Clean and organize room, anterooms, and surrounding premises (*Guide* pg. 72).
- Record daily completion of each task, initial each task, and date the log.

As needed:

- Ensure adequate feed is available, as applicable by species (*Guide* pg. 65-68).
 - Schedule dependent on species and life stage. Contact Campus Veterinary Services for guidance on appropriate feeding regimens.
- Clean and disinfect primary enclosure (*Guide* pg. 69-71).
- Disinfect the animal room including walls, floors, and ceilings (*Guide* pg. 72).
- Remove and replace worn or damaged equipment from primary enclosures and surrounding facility (*Guide* pg. 72).
- Clean and sanitize feed storage containers (*Guide* pg. 67).

- Each facility will develop their own best practices with sanitization typically occurring every 6 months or whenever there is a change in species but may vary with facility.

Environmental Enrichment:

- Refer to the Environmental Enrichment policy ([SOC-30-102](#)).

Facilities:

- Temperature alarms must be installed in all rooms housing snakes (*Guide* pg. 143).
- Adequate ventilation must be provided for the health and comfort of the animal at all times.
 - A minimum of 10-15 fresh room air exchanges per hour shall be provided in animal housing areas (*Guide* pg. 46).
- Floors shall be moisture-resistant, non-absorbent, impact-resistant, and relatively smooth (*Guide* pg. 137). Refer to Physical Plant SOC 50-102.

Housing:

- Floor space taken up by food bowls, water containers, and enrichment devices should not be considered part of the floor space (*Guide* pg. 56).
- Animals must have enough space to express their natural postures and postural adjustments without touching the enclosure walls or ceiling, be able to turn around, and have ready access to food and water. In addition, there must be sufficient space to comfortably rest away from areas soiled by urine and feces (*Guide* pg. 56).