



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

FOR US POSTAL SERVICE DELIVERY:

Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
6700B Rockledge Drive, Suite 2500, MSC 6910
Bethesda, Maryland 20892-6910
Home Page: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/olaw.htm>

FOR EXPRESS MAIL:

Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
6700B Rockledge Drive, Suite 2500
Bethesda, Maryland 20817
Telephone: (301) 496-7163
Facsimile: (301) 402-7065

August 29, 2019

Re: Animal Welfare Assurance
A3413-01 [OLAW Case 2F]

Michael R. Blackburn, Ph.D.
Executive Vice President and
Chief Academic Officer
University of Texas Health Science Center-Houston
7000 Fannin St., UCT-1732
Houston, TX 77030

Dear Dr. Blackburn,

The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) acknowledges receipt of your August 20, 2019 letter reporting an instance of noncompliance with the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. Your letter supplemented the information contained in an initial telephone report to this office on July 12, 2019. According to the information provided, OLAW understands that on May 24, 2019 it was reported that three goldfish had died due to an extremely low salinity level in the tank when a manual "top-off valve" malfunctioned, allowing a continuous flow of reverse osmosis water. An automatic valve previously failed, and the RO water had subsequently been added to the tank manually. The failure of the automatic valve had not been promptly reported to the CLAMC husbandry supervisor. The involved animal activity was funded by the PHS.

Corrective and preventive actions included replacing the automatic valve and obtaining a spare. The CLAMC aquatics specialist has been instructed to promptly notify the CLAMC husbandry supervisor and veterinary staff when a component of the aquatic life-support system fails. No significant costs related to this incident were identified.

OLAW appreciates the consideration of this matter by the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, which was consistent with the philosophy of institutional self-regulation. Based on the information provided, OLAW agrees that appropriate corrective and preventive actions were taken subsequent to the incident. We appreciate being informed of this matter and find no cause for further action by this office.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Brent C. Morse, DVM
Director
Division of Compliance Oversight
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare

cc: IACUC Contact



**Office of the Executive Vice President
and Chief Academic Officer**

Michael R. Blackburn, Ph.D.
Executive Vice President, Chief Academic Officer

August 20, 2019

Brent Morse, D.V.M., DACLAM
Director, Division of Compliance Oversight
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
Rockledge One, Suite 360, MSC 7982
6705 Rockledge Drive
Bethesda, MD 20892-7982

Re: Assurance A3413-01

Dear Dr. Morse,

The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) provides this report of a mechanical failure resulting in deaths to animals. In accordance with Assurance A3413-01 and PHS Policy IV.F.3.a., a preliminary report was made by the (b) (6) to you on July 12, 2019.

On May 24, 2019, the Animal Welfare Committee (AWC) received a report of an equipment mechanical failure resulting in the death of three goldfish. Specifically, a manual top-off valve of a single fish tank malfunctioned resulting in a continuous addition of reverse-osmosis (RO) water to the tank housing the three goldfish. Consequently, the salinity level dropped to extremely low levels ($0.05 \mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$), resulting in the death of three goldfish. The top-off valve was manually turned on and subsequently turned off on May 22 following the addition of RO water to the tank. Because the top-off valve failed in the "off" position the addition of RO water continued until May 23 when the malfunction was noted. Manual addition of RO water using the top-off valve was being performed by the Center for Laboratory Animal Medicine and Care (CLAMC) aquatics specialist due to a malfunctioning float valve that the AWC and CLAMC husbandry supervisor was not initially aware of. The float valve began to initially fail approximately in January or February of 2019. Continual addition of RO water to the tank as a result of the malfunctioning float valve required an increase in the manual addition of aquatic salt to the tank system to maintain acceptable salinity levels. In order to decrease the consumption of salt the aquatics specialist deactivated the malfunctioning float valve requiring the RO water to now be added manually via the top-off valve.

The float valve was readjusted on June 4, 2019. Two new top-off valves, a replacement and a spare, were ordered and the malfunctioning top-off valve was replaced on June 12, 2019. The pH and salinity level of the tank was determined to be stable following the repair of the valve and is now functioning normally and housing goldfish. No further problems have been noted.

713.500.3544 phone 713.500.3059 fax
7000 Fannin St., UCT-1732
Houston, TX 77030

Brent Morse, D.V.M., DACLAM
Re: Assurance A3413-01
August 20, 2019
Page 2 of 2.

The CLAMC aquatics specialist has been instructed to promptly notify the CLAMC husbandry supervisor and veterinary staff when a component of the aquatic life-support system fails. Aquatic and other CLAMC personnel will document concerns and events associated with the aquatic life-support system components in the standard CLAMC logbook for the room housing the tanks.

The animals involved in this incident were supported by NIH funding (02-25620000-50032-13-0011494). No significant costs associated with this event were identified. Funds will be returned if associated costs are identified.

The AWC Protocol Deviation Subcommittee has investigated the incident, evaluated the corrective action plan, and feels that the incident has been successfully resolved.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Michael R. Blackburn, Ph.D.
Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer

MRB/tsl

cc: Dr. Christophe Ribelayga, IACUC Chair

(b) (6)

AWC Office

Na, Jane (NIH/OD) [E]

From: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)
Sent: Friday, August 23, 2019 4:14 PM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: Blackburn, Michael R; Ribelayga, Christophe P; (b) (6) Animal Welfare Committee, GM; OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)
Subject: RE: Assurance A3413-01

Dear (b) (6)

Thank you for providing these four final reports. All four attachments were received. We will send official responses soon.

Jane

Jane Na, DVM, CPIA
Veterinary Medical Officer
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
National Institutes of Health
Phone (301) 402-1922
E-fax (301) 451-5609

Disclaimer: Please note that this message and any of its attachments are intended for the named recipient(s) only and may contain confidential, protected, or privileged information that should not be distributed to unauthorized individuals. If you have received this message in error, please contact the sender.

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Friday, August 23, 2019 2:49 PM
To: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) <olawdco@od.nih.gov>
Cc: Blackburn, Michael R <Michael.R.Blackburn@uth.tmc.edu>; Ribelayga, Christophe P <Christophe.P.Ribelayga@uth.tmc.edu>; (b) (6) Animal Welfare Committee, GM <awc@uth.tmc.edu>
Subject: Assurance A3413-01
Importance: High

Sent on behalf of Michael R. Blackburn, Ph.D., EVP & Chief Academic Officer / Institutional Official, UTHealth—

Dear Dr. Morse,

Please find attached four (4) PDFs concerning the above referenced.

Please advise if you have any issues with receiving the attachments.

Thanks and regards,

(b) (6)

(b) (6)



Initial Report of Noncompliance

By:

Voicemail from
7/12/19

Date:

7/19/19

Time:

Name of Person reporting:

Telephone #: (b) (6)

Fax #:

Email:

Name of Institution:

Assurance number:

Univ of Texas Health - Houston
A3413Did incident involve PHS funded activity? Yes

Funding component: _____

Was funding component contacted (if necessary): _____

What happened?

Protocol deviation. Death of 3 goldfish due to malfunctioning float valve → ↑ R.O. water → ↓ salinity. Float valve completely failed → ↓↓ salinity → fish death.

Species involved:

* Personnel involved:

Dates and times:

Animal deaths:

Goldfish
Researcher
Jan → Feb 2019
Yes, 3 fish

Projected plan and schedule for correction/prevention (if known): _____

Replaced valve & have spare valve

Projected submission to OLAW of final report from Institutional Official:

OFFICE USE ONLY

Case # _____

* "aquatic specialist"