



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE  
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

FOR US POSTAL SERVICE DELIVERY:

Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare  
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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) 480-3387

October 5, 2021

Re: Animal Welfare Assurance  
A3629-01 [OLAW Case O]

Dr. Joseph Heppert  
Vice President for Research and Innovation  
TTU Institutional Official  
Texas Tech University  
Box 41075  
Lubbock, Texas 79409

Dear Dr. Heppert,

The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) acknowledges receipt of the September 17, 2021 letter reporting an instance of noncompliance with the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals within the animal care and use program at Texas Tech University. According to the information provided, OLAW understands that 20 deceased mice were found in a euthanasia chamber within a biosafety cabinet. The mice had been left overnight in the euthanasia chamber with continuous CO2 flow. The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) identified several violations to the approved protocol and the IACUC euthanasia policy: (1) An excessive number of incompatible mice were euthanized in a single chamber. (2) No secondary physical euthanasia method was performed. (3) Mice were left unattended during the procedure, and (4) the CO2 was left on necessitating a purge of the room housing the euthanasia apparatus as a safety precaution. The mice involved were supported by PHS funding.

Corrective and preventive measures included comprehensive euthanasia retraining for all laboratory staff. The research staff members responsible for this incident were suspended from conducting euthanasia procedures until comprehensive retraining was completed. The IACUC reviewed the incident and is satisfied with the actions taken.

OLAW appreciates the consideration of this matter by Texas Tech University which was consistent with the philosophy of institutional self-regulation. Based on the information provided, OLAW is satisfied that appropriate actions have been taken to investigate this incident and prevent recurrence. We appreciate being informed of this matter and find no cause for further action by this office.

Sincerely,

Robyn M. Engel -S

Digitally signed by Robyn M. Engel -S  
Date: 2021.10.05 09:02:15 -04'00'

Robyn M. Engel, DVM  
Animal Welfare Program Specialist  
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare

cc: IACUC contact



A3629-0



9-17-2021

To: OLAW

From: Dr. Joseph Heppert, IO

CC: TTU IACUC;

RE: Non-Compliance

On August 25<sup>th</sup>, twenty deceased mice were found in a euthanasia chamber within a biosafety cabinet. The CO<sub>2</sub> regulator controlling gas flow to the chamber was open and gas was flowing. The mice had been left in the euthanasia chamber overnight. The following violations to the approved protocol and TTU IACUC Euthanasia Policy and related SOP were noted:

- An excessive number of mice were euthanized simultaneously in the same chamber indicating that incompatible mice were euthanized together
- No secondary physical euthanasia method was performed
- Mice were left unattended during the procedure
- CO<sub>2</sub> flow continued until tanks were emptied, and as such, the room housing the euthanasia apparatus had to be purged of CO<sub>2</sub> as a safety precaution

Consequently, the Attending Veterinarian immediately suspended the responsible research staff from conducting any further euthanasia procedures until comprehensive retraining could be completed. All other lab members were also required to undergo comprehensive euthanasia retraining. All required retraining was completed by 9/10/2021.

The IACUC designated this event as significant non-compliance during its regular meeting on 9/15/2021. The committee further determined that this issue was identified, investigated, and corrected quickly and efficiently and that no further corrective actions were necessary.

This protocol is associated with the following NIH grants: 5R01AI137846-03, 1R56AI119397-01A1, 5R01AI121322-05



**Wolff, Axel (NIH/OD) [E]**

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**From:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 29, 2021 7:46 AM  
**To:** Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee  
**Cc:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)  
**Subject:** RE: Non-compliance report A3629-01

Thank you for this report, (b) (6) We will send a response soon.

Axel Wolff, M.S., D.V.M.  
Deputy Director, OLAW

**From:** Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee <iacuc@ttu.edu>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 27, 2021 1:48 PM  
**To:** OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) <olawdco@od.nih.gov>  
**Cc:** Heppert, Joseph <Joseph.Heppert@ttu.edu>; (b) (6)  
(b) (6)  
**Subject:** Non-compliance report A3629-01

Dear OLAW,  
Please find the attached report for a non-compliance issue our IACUC recently handled. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Thank you,

(b) (6)