

University of Cambridge

The responsible use of anaesthetic agents

Following several incidents UBS advises users of UBS animal facilities that the following policy has been agreed.

1. Gaseous anaesthesia must not be routinely used/administered in any University designated facility by anyone working alone in a surgical area/room, at any time. Work must be scheduled so that a UBS Surgery Technician or other suitably competent individual is present to oversee/operate/monitor the gaseous anaesthetic equipment while surgery is undertaken. If the Named Veterinary Surgeon [NVS] has determined that the procedure can be undertaken alone, the researcher must comply with the University "Resourcing of surgical technicians for rodent surgery" position paper and if working out of hours, the Unit SOP for out of hours/lone working.. For interpretation of this policy in exceptional circumstances, please seek advice from the NVS.

The policy also applies to non-surgical procedures undertaken in designated procedure rooms/areas. A competent UBS staff member or a colleague must be alerted to when the researcher arrives and leaves the facility if the researcher is working alone and using gaseous anaesthesia.

2. Gaseous anaesthetic agents must not be used by or in an area where a known expectant mother is working.
3. Injectable anaesthetic agents may be used where they are a justifiable alternative only and not on the basis of convenience for the researcher to work around 1 and 2 above. If a researcher intends to use injectable anaesthetic agents, where previously a gaseous anaesthetic agent was used, the researcher must justify on scientific grounds to the NVS why changing the anaesthetic used is appropriate and how it accords with the principles of the 3R's.
4. The use of anaesthetic reversal agents, after administering injectable anaesthetic agents, to hasten recovery can be beneficial for the welfare of the animal but is not acceptable on the basis of researcher's time constraints. When anaesthetic reversal agents are used they should be integral to the anaesthetic regime. The use of anaesthetic reversal agents must always be used following NVS advice.

10/08/2016

Agreed and signed off by Dr M Vinnell and the UBS Directors on 19th August 2016 in accordance with 22nd July 2016 UBSGSC meeting action.