

Mice Found Dead with Malocclusion

x5 Not pursued as non-compliance,

x1 Letter of Reprimand



What happened?

- Mice have been found dead with well-established malocclusion.

Why did we have to report it?

- LoR: SC 4(5), a failure to provide adequate daily health checks.

What did we learn?

- Mice can sometimes only be accounted for within the nest or fun tunnel and not expected to move. This means it becomes very easy to miss an animal that is suffering.
- Mice are prey animals and will behave normally until they no longer can.
- There are some scenarios, when the grimace scale alone is not a sufficient assessment tool to determine the presence of welfare issues.
- It is essential to ensure mice have a full body assessment during their AM checks.
- There is sometimes a misconception that malocclusion is a rapidly occurring disorder.
- Malocclusion is a slow and progressive disorder that occurs over weeks rather than days.
- It is vital that our daily AM checks capture differences in mouse physique and behaviour to prevent the ongoing progression of malocclusion as early as possible, to ensure mice do not suffer unnecessarily.

What did we change?

- As standard practice, any person that performs a task that results in an animal experiencing an adverse welfare impact, and/or unnecessary suffering is re-assessed and where necessary re-trained.
- If mice are not seen for a full body check outside of the nest or fun tunnel, technicians will return to the cage at the end of the row being checked to attempt a second check. If still unable to see the mice fully, the cage is taken to the change station and opened.
- SOPs have been updated to include teeth checks for malocclusion or misalignment (SOP 134 Breeding set-ups – IVC facilities and SOP 240 Health Checks).
- NC3Rs resources are available to make people aware of malocclusion and posters have been placed up in some rodent facilities <https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/3rs-resources/malocclusion-mice>.
- A bite-size malocclusion workshop is being created for Moodle and will be used to provide refresher training for all staff. All new inductees will also complete this workshop.

SC PEL Standard Conditions

4(5)

The health and well-being of protected animals, and the environmental conditions in all parts of the establishment where animals are kept, shall be checked at least once daily by a competent person. Arrangements shall be made to ensure any defect discovered and any avoidable pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm discovered is eliminated as quickly as possible.