

Veterinary Medical Records

Office of the Attending Veterinarian University of Kentucky

PURPOSE: This document establishes responsibilities and provides guidance regarding the components of veterinary medical records for animals used in research, teaching, and testing at the University of Kentucky.

BACKGROUND: Medical records are a critical component of the veterinary medical care program. Medical records are used to identify and document medical and behavioral animal health events (immunizations, injuries, illnesses, aggression, etc.), animal production (births, egg production, milk production, etc.), animal observations, and track animal care and use. Health records must be sufficiently comprehensive to demonstrate the delivery of adequate husbandry and health care to the animals. The maintenance of comprehensive and accurate medical records is an essential component of the veterinary medical care program and the animal care and use program at the University of Kentucky.

APPLICATION: The guidance in this document is applicable to clinical veterinarians, unit faculty advisors, herd managers, facility managers, and personnel directly handling animals used in research, teaching, and testing at the University of Kentucky. The specific requirements for the veterinary medical record system will vary dramatically dependent upon the animal species involved, the type of housing, and the requirements of each specific unit at the University of Kentucky. Each unit, in collaboration with the Veterinarian of Record and the Attending Veterinarian, must develop specific requirements and standard operating procedures detailing their specific medical record requirements and responsibilities for the maintenance of the medical records.

RECORD REQUIREMENTS: Animal medical records may be maintained as individual animal records, group records, or as a combination of both individual and group records. Group records are often most appropriate for animals kept as cohorts where the housing unit serves as a single unit (cage, tank, pasture, pen, room, etc.) and the animals in the single unit are treated similarly. Group records may document the performance of routine preventive medical procedures on the entire group of animals (anti-parasitical administration, immunizations, hoof-trimming, etc.) Individual animal records should be maintained for animals that receive individual animal health evaluations and should document the clinical observations for each individual animal. In cases where the entire group of animals receives routine preventive medical procedures, treatments, or observations and specific individuals receive individual evaluations and/or treatments, a combination of both individual and group records may be most appropriate. In all cases the goal of the record system is to efficiently convey the necessary information to all individuals involved in the animal's care.

Components of the Veterinary Medical Record:^{4,5,6}

1. Identification of the animal(s) or group(s);
2. Clinical information, such as the animal's behavior, results of physical examinations, and observed abnormalities, illnesses, and/or injuries;
3. Immunizations and other prophylactic treatments and procedures;
4. Documentation and interpretation of diagnostic tests;
5. Documentation of research interventions;
6. Treatments prescribed and administered;
7. Clinical response and follow up information;
8. Descriptions of surgical procedures, anesthesia, analgesia, and perioperative care;
9. Methods used to control pain and distress;
10. Documentation of resolution;
11. Documentation of euthanasia or other disposition; and
12. Necropsy findings if necropsy is performed.

Entries into the veterinary medical record should be made by the individual(s) administering the treatments, making the observations, performing the procedures, making the evaluation, etc. Entries should be legible, dated, and identifiable to the individual making the entry should clarification be later required.

TYPES OF RECORD SYSTEMS: The record system should efficiently convey the necessary information to individuals (principal investigator, clinical veterinarian, animal care personnel, Attending Veterinarian, IACUC, etc.) involved in the animal care program. The types of record systems used may vary from notations on individual cage or pen identification cards to written or electronic individual record systems containing observations, clinical laboratory information, procedural records, etc. In all cases the records should be readily available and accessible at or near to the animals' housing location. Centrally maintained records that are not easily accessible at the animal housing site do not fulfill the requirements and are not acceptable.

Veterinary Medical Records are official documents of the University of Kentucky.

REFERENCES:

1. Animal Welfare Regulations 9 CFR Chapter 1, Subchapter A, §2.33 and §2.40.
2. Animal Care Resource Guide - Policy #3: Veterinary Care, Issue Date: March 25, 2011.
3. Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 8th edition, National Research Council, 2011.
4. Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching, 3rd edition, Federation of Animal Science Societies, 2010.
5. Field, K., M. Bailey, L.L. Foresman, R. L. Harris, S. L. Motzel, R. A. Rockar, G. Ruble, and M. A. Suckow, (2007) "Medical Records for Animals Used in Research, Teaching, and Testing: Public Statement from the American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine" ILAR Journal 48(1):37-41.

- IACUC Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines, IACUC 116: Research Medical Records, University of Kentucky IACUC, August 18, 2010.
http://www.research.uky.edu/ori/univet/resources/sop/IACUC_116_Research_Medical_Records.pdf

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