



University of Maryland College Park Animal Care and Use Standard

Use of Wood in Animal Facilities

Purpose: This standard describes appropriate uses and requirements for maintaining wood in animal facilities.

Background: Primary enclosures for animals should be durable with smooth impervious surfaces that are easily sanitizable and that are not detrimental to the health or research use of the animals. The *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* states “Less durable materials, such as wood, may be appropriate in select situations, such as outdoor corrals, perches, climbing structures, resting areas, and perimeter fences for primary enclosures.” The *Guide* also addresses the use of wood as enrichment and bedding for some species.

Standards: The use of wood in animal facilities will be minimized. Where appropriate, wood surfaces will be painted or otherwise sealed with nontoxic materials to improve durability and facilitate sanitation. Pressure treated wood should not be used in areas where animals may chew or eat the wood. When wood items become damaged or cannot be easily sanitized, they will be replaced.

Methodology:

1. Wood may be used for enrichment, climbing structures, resting areas, fencing, or primary housing such as stalls or nesting boxes.
2. If wood-handled cleaning implements are used, they should be marked with a specific room number and their use restricted to that room.
3. Wood supports and shelves may be used to support cages or aquaria. Vertical wooden supports should be isolated from the floor.
4. Wood should not be in constant direct contact with water or animal feed.
5. Where appropriate (e.g., most exterior uses of wood, interior uses where wood does not come in direct contact with animals, etc.), wood shall be sealed using exterior-grade products.
6. Wood items may be sanitized in place or run through a cage washer. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to autoclave wooden items.