



GUIDANCE FOR ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE MEMBERS CONDUCTING ANNUAL SITE VISITS

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The Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) [*policy statement on: terms of reference for animal care committees*](#) (2006) describes the roles and responsibilities of institutional animal care committees. These include the requirement to regularly visit all animal care facilities and other areas where personnel could be working with animals. These visits are conducted to better understand the work being done within the institution, to assess institutional animal care and welfare, to meet with those working in the animal facilities/animal work areas to discuss their needs, to assess any weaknesses in the facilities (ageing facilities, overcrowding, insufficient staffing, and any other concerns), to enhance stakeholder communication, and to forward any recommendations or commendations to the person(s) responsible for the facilities and the animal ethics and care program. Site visits to animal facilities by the animal care committee should be conducted at least once a year, and should be documented through the animal care committee minutes or written reports.

Those responsible for the animal facilities should respond to any animal care committee recommendations in writing, and site visit reports should always be followed up on jointly by the senior administration and the animal care committee. For small institutions, the full animal care committee may tour the facilities as a group; for larger institutions, visits to animal care facilities and other animal work areas may be divided between the various members of the committee. No matter what the process employed, **each member of the animal care committee** should participate in some of the facility visit(s) on an **annual basis**.

As a resource to animal care committees to ensure consistency and thoroughness when conducting site visits, and to facilitate the documentation and follow-up of recommendations made by the animal care committee during the visits, the CCAC has provided a **basic checklist** for institutions to use as a starting point in building their own site visit checklist. The CCAC encourages institutions to use the checklist as a guide in creating their own list, adapted to their needs and to the type of animal-based work at the institution (e.g., biosafety level 2 or 3 work, work with nonhuman primates).

For more information in regard to site visits, please see the CCAC webinar, [*ACC Site Visits of Animal Facilities*](#).

BASIC SITE VISIT CHECKLIST – [INSERT FACILITY NAME]

Visit Date: ____ / ____ / ____

PROGRAM ELEMENT	APPROPRIATE		COMMENT	FOLLOW-UP		
	Yes	No		By whom	Date due	Date done
Facility Infrastructure and Maintenance						
Design of the facility (clean to dirty traffic patterns, appropriate inclusive/exclusive barriers as needed, sufficient & appropriate housing and procedural space, sufficient & appropriate service space (washing area, storage))						
Environmental parameters (air quality, temperature and relative humidity control & records, light (photoperiod, intensity), noise control)						
Maintenance of HVAC and other basic equipment, availability of back-up power (duplication of critical pieces of equipment)						
Maintenance of internal surfaces (walls, ceilings, floors, counters, etc.)						
Equipment maintenance (anesthesia equipment, etc.)						
Security of the facility						
[Insert other]						
Animal Care and Facility Management						
Overall quality of animal care						
Housing and environmental enrichment for each group of animals						
Sufficient availability of qualified personnel at all times when animals are present, with good overall coordination of activities throughout the facility to avoid cross-contamination or other problems						
Availability and implementation of appropriate SOPs, ready availability of at least the most relevant sections (procedure summary, endpoints) of active protocols						
Effective communication among veterinarian(s), facility manager/animal care staff and animal users (cage/pen cards, daily room checklist, summaries of animal care for each (large) animal or group of (small) animals, incident reports, “sick animal” reports, veterinary presence/communication for invasive work and related endpoints)						
Effective communication from animal users to animal care staff/veterinarian(s) (written/dated summaries of procedures/care undertaken by research teams members for each (large) animal or group of (small) animals, ready availability of surgery, breeding records)						
[Insert other]						
Biosecurity						
Humane vermin control						
Foot baths/hand sanitization						
Personal protective equipment (PPE)						
[Insert other]						
Biosafety/Application of Occupational Health and Safety Measures						
Unprotected electrical fixtures						
Slippery floors						
Mechanisms for storing/limiting access to controlled substances						
Other hazards						
[Insert other]						
Housekeeping (Cleanliness, Organization of Materials, Waste Storage/Disposal)						
General organization and cleanliness						
Cage (pen, other enclosure), bottle and other equipment cleaning procedures						
Waste disposal						
Sanitation of special facilities (surgery, food preparation, etc.)						
Expiry date (drugs, products, feed, supplements, equipment maintenance, etc.)						
[Insert other]						