SOP: Building Evacuation Procedures

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SCOPE
The following procedures are applicable to all animal housing facilities and animal research laboratories during a mandatory building evacuation. Animal research personnel leaving an animal unattended and then immediately returning to the animal upon reentry to a building are not in violation of regulations.

PROCEDURES
When the emergency alarm is heard but no smoke or fire is seen, personnel should vacate the area immediately. Conscious animals should be secured in a primary or secondary enclosure quickly and as practical as possible without endangering personnel safety. Any animal surgical procedure in progress must stop and procedures initiated to maximize animal health and welfare, typically under the direction of a DLAR, SNI, or MWRI veterinarian. This may require leaving anesthetized animals unattended or euthanizing anesthetized animals.

All building occupants shall exit quickly in a safe and orderly manner using appropriate evacuation routes posted in the area. Do not use elevators. Occupants shall exit the building using the nearest marked exit and proceed to the pre-determined assembly area identified for the building. If possible and safe, all laboratory gases should be turned off and doors and windows closed upon exiting. If smoke is present, stay close to the floor as you exit. Obey the directions of emergency response personnel.

Once outside, evacuees should proceed to the assembly area for the building so as not to impede the movements of emergency response personnel. Do not return to the evacuated building unless directed by Campus Police or other emergency response personnel.

Building specific assembly areas have been identified to provide a location for evacuees to gather upon exiting their building. Evacuees should follow the direction of emergency response personnel to the appropriate assembly area.

Once authorized to return to a building, animal research personnel are to return to their animals and assess animal health and well-being. Animal health or welfare concerns should be promptly reported to the facility veterinary staff. DLAR facility veterinary staff contact information is posted at the facility entrances and can be found on the DLAR website at https://web.dlar.pitt.edu. If veterinarian medical emergency arises outside of normal business hours (8:00 am – 4:30 pm; Monday – Friday), call the Veterinary Emergency Answering Service at (412) 624-VETS (8387).