



# University of Maryland College Park Animal Care and Use Standard

## Separation of Species

**Purpose:** This standard describes the general circumstances under which different animal species should be housed in separate rooms or, depending on health status and other considerations, may be housed in the same room.

**Background:** Different animal species are often physically separated to prevent disease transmission between species. This physical separation also precludes anxiety and behavioral or physiological changes related to conflict between the different species. While different species are generally separated by housing them in separate rooms, effective separation might also be accomplished through various ventilated or filtered caging arrangements. Under certain circumstances, it may also be acceptable to house different animal species in the same room.<sup>1</sup>

**Standards:** Physical separation of different animal species is recommended to prevent disease transmission and interspecies conflict. Separation will generally be accomplished by housing different species in different animal housing rooms. Whenever practicable, animals of the *same species* but *different pathogen status* will also be housed in different animal housing rooms. Behaviorally compatible species with a similar pathogen status may be housed in the same room as described below or at the discretion of the University Attending Veterinarian (UAV).

**Methodology:** The UAV will make a final determination as to the appropriateness of various housing situations. In general:

1. Avian species should be separated when space is available. Compatible species may be housed in the same room if they are not known disease carriers and have the same physiological and environmental requirements.
2. Compatible species of fish, amphibians and reptiles may be housed in the same room with others of their class. Nets and handling equipment should remain separate between systems. Recirculated water should remain separate between aquaria systems or appropriately decontaminated before being circulated to another system.
3. Rats and mice of acceptable health status may be housed in the same room at the request of an investigator and/or the discretion of the UAV.
4. Behaviorally and physiologically compatible animals of different species may be housed in isolators in the same Animal Biosafety Level-2 or -3 at the request of an investigator and/or discretion of the UAV.

### **References:**

1. Pritchett-Corning KR, Chang FT, Festing MF. Breeding and housing laboratory rats and mice in the same room does not affect the growth or reproduction of either species. *J Am Assoc Lab Anim Sci.* 2009 Sep;48(5):492-8. PMID: 19807969; PMCID: PMC2755018.