Animal journals in tick@lab

Reference 1-1145/2025
Valid from 20 November 2025

Karolinska Institutet

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Diarienummer: 1-1145/2025	**Dnr föregående version:** 1-645/2023	**Beslutsdatum:** 2025-11-20	**Giltighetstid:** Gäller tillsvidare
Handläggning och Beslut: NACWO, Djurskyddsorganet vid Karolinska Institutet		**Remiss:** tick@lab team	
Dokumenttyp: Rekommendation		**Revidering med avseende på:** Uppdaterad titel Uppdateringar pga ny föreskrift SJVFS 2025:28 saknr L151	

Introduction

All work with research animals must be documented in accordance with the legislation: The Animal Welfare Act, the Animal Welfare Ordinance, and the Swedish board of Agricultures regulation and general advice on laboratory animals SJVFS 2025:28 saknr L151 (herafter called L151; Please see appendix 1 for a translation of relevant sections).
All animal journals must be done in the electronic system Tick@lab, provided by A-tunes. The following guideline aims to facilitate good journal keeping at the animal facilities at Comparative Medicine.

Purpose

This guideline provides general and specific information about the tick@lab system to all personnel (e.g. animal technicians, researchers, veterinarians, Named animal care and welfare officer (NACWO)) working with research animals.

Journals in Tick@lab

General Information

All observations concerning animal welfare, procedures, and terminations performed on laboratory animals must be documented in the animal´s journal. The journals are done under “animal history” and the termination is done by chosing “Termination” from the roll-down menu and can be done for an individual animal or a batch of animals. For tutorials, please go to Tick@Lab tutorials.

1) The holder of an ethical approval (hereafter called PI) is responsible to ensure that the information in the animal journals is sufficiently and continuously updated.
    a. However, it is the responsibility of the person performing a procedure or an observation to update the journal.
2) The PI is responsible to ensure that animals are on the correct and valid ethical approval prior initiation of an experiment.
3) The status of the animal must be changed from “Ready” to “In experiment” at the start of a study or procedure. This will ensure that the used animal is reported corrected in the system.

4) The journals **must be updated in connection** with the observation/procedure or immediately after execution. It must be clear from the journal which part of the ethical approval has been done.
    a. This is done under "animal history" in Tick@lab.
5) Several animals can be marked as a cohort and the "Animal history" notation can be done for all animals at the same time if they have undergone the same procedure and/or the observational outcome was the same.

    NB: Non-human primate, rabbits, cats, and dogs must have individual journals.

    NB: The animal journal must give clear information about the procedures a specific animal has been subjected to. For animals registered in batches, e.g. zebrafish, the animal journal entry can be done batchwise as long as all animals in the respective batch have been subjected to exactly the same procedures.
    It is very important that you don't make the same journal entry for 20 animals if 10 of these animals were treated with a substance and 10 were treated with placebo.

    NB: The daily care done by the animal facility staff is documented on separate day lists usually found at the door into the animal room.

6) Anyone, e.g. animal technician, veterinarian, facility staff, researchers oversight officers, must be able to understand what has happened to an animal from the journal e.g.:
    a. Animal welfare parameters have been evaluated in accordance with the ethical approval, and the humane endpoints has not been reached or if reached the animal was terminated.
    b. Start, duration and recovery of anaesthesia.
    c. Time/date for administrations of analgesia.
        i. You **cannot** write "analgesia was provided for 2 days post-op". You **must** write each day analgesia was provided.
    d. Time/date for post-procedure care including observations. If all looks fine this must also be documented.
    e. Unexpected events during experiment including time, what happened, was humane endpoint reached, veterinary contact/involvement etc.
    f. Reason for termination of the animal.

   g. The actual severity level for animals that has been used in experiments.
      i. It is the cumulative severity level an animal has reached during the entire study that must be set for individual animals.
7) A detailed experimental protocol/explanation must be attached the individual animal if short description or abbreviations are used.
   a. Templates are recommended and there are several templates that you can chose in tick@lab.
      Please contact the tick@lab team if you want to create your own templates for your experimental setup.
   b. You must always document times, dates and animal welfare check-ups in the journal.
8) In accordance with L151 8 ch. 2 §, the veterinarian must be contacted prior start of experiments for all procedures that are classified as severe severity (avsevärd svårhetsgrad) or for procedures where the veterinarian has requested to be informed prior start.
   a. This can be done via task in tick@lab or via an email to vet@km.ki.se. Please include what procedure will be done.

Practical instructions for journal keeping

Journal keeping prior initiation of experiment

- Animals that not yet are in an experiment or between studies (e.g. for animals that has been approved for re-use by the facility veterinarian) are in the status "Ready".
- Observations must be documented under Animal history e.g.
  - wound including monitoring and, if applicable, when it healed,
  - reason for single housing and a plan for the single housed animal,
  - other illness that does not reach humane endpoints.
- Termination of an animal that has never been used in an experiment.
  - Go to "Termination".
  - Chose exit reason, e.g. "bred-but-not used"
  - Describe the reason for termination under "Notes" and add euthanasia method.
  - Press "Save" and close the window.
  - *Please note that severity level is not relevant for non-experimental animals*.

To start and end an experiment

Animals used in experiments must be put in the status "In experiment". This will ensure that all used animals are reported correctly in the yearly reports and

minimise the hands-on counting that you may need to do for the yearly statistical reports over animal usage.

1) Ensure that the animal/s is on the correct ethical approval.
2) Change the status of animal/s to "In experiment":
    a. In the pop-up window: You can make a comment e.g. what type of experiment
    b. Under "Severity", chose the prospective severity level appropriate for the experiment.
    c. Press "Continue".
3) Document procedures/observations under "Animal history", use a template if suitable.

Non-Recovery experiment (Terminal + organ)

The severity level terminal + organ can only be used for animals that are terminated without any previous interventions, e.g. for tissue, collection of embryos. Animals that undergo any prior procedures including anaesthesia and/or develops an adverse phenotype must be reported under another suitable severity level.

a. Go to "Termination" and, if you did not put the animal in status "In experiment", tick the "Exit as used box".
b. Chose exit reason (i.e. Experimental endpoint).
c. Describe the reason for termination under "Animal history", e.g. tissue collection, and add euthanasia method.
   Please observe that embryos from the last trimester must be counted.
d. Chose correct severity level, i.e. "terminal + organ"
e. Press "Save" and close the window.

Non-recovery experiment (Terminal)

The severity level terminal can only be used for animals that never wakes up from anaesthesia, i.e. non-recovery experiments where all procedures. This severity level may also be used if an animal under anaesthesia is terminated due to humane endpoint reached instead of waking up e.g. something went wrong during surgery.

a. Change the animal status from "Ready" to "In experiment".
b. Describe when anaesthesia was initiated and what was provided, duration of anaesthesia, what procedure/s was done under "Animal history".
   You need to describe if anything unexpected happened leading to premature termination of the animals (i.e. humane endpoint reached).
c. Go to "Termination" in the end of the experiment.
d. Chose exit reason (i.e. Experimental endpoint).
e. Describe the reason for termination under "Notes", e.g. tissue collection, and add euthanasia method.
f. Chose correct severity level, i.e. "terminal".

g. Press “Save” and close the window.

Recovery experiment (Mild, Moderate, or Severe)

The severity levels mild, moderate, and severe are used for all experiments where animals undergo recovery experiments e.g. gavage, injections, administration of various substance and diets, anaesthesia allowing animals to wake up, behaviour tests. The actual severity level is determined when the entire experiment is ended and must reflect the animal´s suffering during the entire experiment. Several factors influence what the actual severity level is e.g. combination of procedures, type of procedure, phenotypes, duration, measures taken to reduce suffering (for more information: Recommendation 9 Assessment of severity levels in research animals).

a. Change the animal status from “Ready” to “In experiment”.
b. Continuously update the “Animal history” with procedure/s and observation/s throughout the experiment.
   - Use templates if suitable.
   - It must be clear from the journal what has happened to the animal.
   - You need to describe if anything unexpected happened leading to premature termination of the animals (i.e. humane endpoint reached).
c. The veterinarian must be involved for severe severity procedures/models.
d. Press “Save” and close window after each notation.
e. At the end of the experiment, go to “Termination” in the end of the experiment or if the experiment needs to stop prematurely.
f. Chose exit reason (Experimental endpoint or Humane endpoint reached).
g. Describe the reason for termination under “Notes” and add euthanasia method.
h. Chose the appropriate severity level based on the cumulative suffering of an animal during the entire experiment.
i. Press “Save” and close the window.

Quick reference guide for all animal journals.

The following information must be found in the animal journals regardless of the animal is in experiment or not.

- Registration number of the ethical approval
- Origin of the animals (bought, own breeding)
- Date of arrival/date of birth/date of weaning
- Who received the animals upon arrival
- Number of animals (in each group)
- Identity if appropriate
- Species/strain/gender

- For animals in experiments: All actions performed with the animals, with date (time if used) and signature.
- Diseases/injuries with action taken due to them, including date and signature.
- Culling/deaths with reason/probable cause, including date and signature.
    - The severity level is not defined for animals that never been in an experiment or never developed an adverse phenotype.

Appendix 1 Relevant sections of SJVFS 2025:28 saknr L151

Note 1: *You should have read and understood SJVFS 2025:28 saknr L151 prior work in animal facilities.*

Note 2: *The English translation is only a helping tool and not valid in terms of the law.*

3 Ch. 8 § The responsibility of the holder of the ethical approval (hereafter called PI)

1. Ensure that all personnel under the PI:s responsibility are aware of the laws, regulations, and directives relevant to the animal research activities conducted by the PI.
2. Ensure that all personnel working under the PI:s ethical approval for animal experiments have approved education and competence in accordance with Chapter 6, Sections 7 and 8.
3. Ensure that personnel receive ongoing further education and that those working under the ethical approval for animal experiments maintain and can demonstrate the necessary competence for their tasks in accordance with Chapter 6, Section 9.
4. Ensure that records are kept for animals under ethical approval for animal experiments in accordance with Chapter 13.
5. Ethical approvals for animal experiments, records, and documentation relevant to the experiment are stored in accordance with Chapter 8, Section 12 and Chapter 13, Sections 7 and 8.
6. According to Chapter 7, Section 7, the research leader must consult on the planning of the animal experiment.
7. Ensure that the animal experiment is conducted in accordance with the ethical approval for animal experiments.
8. Prepare written instructions and ensure that the personnel who will carry out an animal experiment or care for laboratory animals in connection with the experiment receive the written instructions and other information as specified in Chapter 7, Section 8.
9. Inform either the facility animal veterinarian or the expert when an animal experiment of considerable severity is initiated, in accordance with Chapter 8, Section 2.

8 Ch. 1-2 §§

1 § During animal experiments, supervision of the animals must occur at intervals sufficient to ensure that the animals are not subjected to more suffering than necessary. If needed, supervision must also take place at night.

There must be a written plan outlining how the person conducting the supervision should act in response to both expected and unexpected effects.

Supervision must be documented in a way that clearly shows when it was performed, what was checked, any actions taken, and by whom.

2 § A facility animal veterinarian or expert must participate in the supervision of laboratory animals in the following cases:

1. All animal experiments of considerable severity,
2. Animal experiments where the regional animal ethics committee has decided so, and
3. Other animal experiments where the laboratory animal veterinarian or expert has deemed it appropriate.

13 Ch. Journal keeping

Animal journals

1 § A journal must be kept individually for all laboratory animals used in animal experiments. However, records may be kept for a group of animals if the animals:

1. Are covered by the same ethical approval for animal experiments,
2. Are subjected to the same experimental procedures, and
3. Are housed in the same cage, box, room, or equivalent.

For primates, dogs, cats, or rabbits, records must always be kept individually.

2 § Anyone who uses, breeds, keeps, or supplies laboratory animals must keep journals of the following:

1. Number and species of animals bred, acquired, delivered, used in experiments, released, or placed in homes.
2. Origin of the animals, including whether they were bred for use in experiments.
3. Dates of acquisition, delivery, release, or placement in homes.
4. From whom the animals were acquired.
5. Name and address of the recipient of the animals.
6. Number and species of animals that have died or been euthanized within the operation, including dates.
7. Cause of death for animals that have died, if known.

8. Information on diseases and injuries, and actions taken as a result.
9. Case number of the ethical approval for the experiment and any amendments.
10. Date of birth, if known.
11. Pedigree designation, identity according to marking, and sex where necessary to ensure compliance with legislation.

General advice for Section 2, items 2 and 4:
For certain types of animal experiments where animals are not bred for research—such as experiments on wild animals, animals caught from nature, or those used at slaughterhouses—the origin may be described by county, area, lake, or similar. The source may be noted as "observed in nature" or "caught in Kattegat," for example.

3 § Journals must be kept in a way that allows identification of which part of the ethical approval has been carried out.
Entries must be made immediately after the action is performed.

4 § For animals used in experiments, the following must also be documented:

1. Experimental procedures performed, including extra care and treatment.
2. Extra care and treatment for genetically modified animals with harmful phenotypes, whether spontaneous or induced.
3. Date of procedures.
4. If animals have been reused according to Chapter 8, Section 13, and in which experiments.

General advice for Section 4:
Examples of experimental procedures include:
1. *Injections (including substance, dose, and volume)*
2. *Surgeries (type, pre- and post-operative pain relief, post-operative monitoring)*
3. *Behavioral tests (including habituation)*
4. *Start and end of food or water restrictions*
5. *Blood sampling*
6. *Use of metabolism cages*

Examples of extra care measures include supervision beyond daily checks, placing food on the floor to help animals access it, or extra cage changes.

Information on Dogs, Cats, and Primates

5 § All breeders, suppliers, and users must record the following for each dog, cat, and primate:

1. Identity
2. Place and date of birth, if known
3. Whether the animal was bred for use in experiments
4. For primates, whether they are offspring of captive-bred primates

6 § Each dog, cat, and primate must be accompanied by individual documentation of its life history, which follows the animal as long as it is used in experiments.
This documentation must be created at birth or as soon as possible thereafter and must include all relevant information on reproduction, veterinary and social conditions, and the projects the animal has been used in.
If the animal is placed in a home, relevant veterinary and social information from the documentation must accompany the animal.

Preservation of journals and individual documentation

7 § Journals under Sections 2–4 must be kept for at least five years after the experiment ends.
They must be accessible to all participants in the experiment or care of the animals while the experiment is ongoing.

8 § Individual documentation under Section 6 must be kept for at least three years after the animal's death or placement in a home.

Appendix 2 Paper journals

There may be situations where you cannot use tick@lab for journal keeping e.g. the tick@lab system is down, the KI server is down, animals are moved to institutions outside KM/KI. In such situations, journal keeping must be done using paper journals which can, if suitable, be attached to the animals when system is up and running again.

General points.

1. The holder of an ethical approval (hereafter called PI) is responsible to ensure that the information in the animal journals is sufficiently and continuously updated.
    a. However, it is the responsibility of the person performing a procedure or an observation to update the journal.
2. The PI is responsible to ensure that animals are on the correct and valid ethical approval prior initiation of an experiment.
3. Experimental journals must <u>always</u> remain in their designated place in the animal facility. Reference numbers of the establishment site license (verksamhetstillstånd) for the facility and the ethical approval, the PI, animal information etc must be stated.
4. Use one experimental journal per cage or cohort of animals within the same experiment. Information in the journal must correspond with the cage cards and vice versa. Individual journals must always be kept for certain species (non-human primates, rabbits, cats, and dogs).
5. Anyone, e.g. animal technician, veterinarian, facility staff, researchers oversight officers, must be able to understand what has happened to an animal from the journal e.g.:
    a. Animal welfare parameters have been evaluated in accordance with the ethical approval, and the humane endpoints has not been reached or if reached the animal was terminated.
    b. Start, duration and recovery of anaesthesia.
    c. Time/date for administrations of analgesia.
        i. You **cannot** write “analgesia was provided for 2 days post-op”. You **must** write each day analgesia was provided.
    d. Time/date for post-procedure care including observations. If all looks fine this must also be documented.
    e. Unexpected events during experiment including time, what happened, was humane endpoint reached, veterinary contact/involvement etc.
    f. Reason for termination of the animal.

    g. The actual severity level for animals that has been used in experiments.
        i. It is the cumulative severity level an animal has reached during the entire study that must be set for individual animals.
6. A detailed experimental protocol/explanation must be attached the individual animal if short description or abbreviations are used.
    a. You must always document times, dates and animal welfare check-ups in the journal.
7. The journal notation/s must **always and continuously** be updated. Observations and/or procedures should be done in conjunction with the observation/procedure or immediately after execution, i.e. the same day.
8. The experimental cage must be labelled with correct experimental cage card.
9. In accordance with L151 8 ch. 2 §, the veterinarian must be contacted prior start of experiments for all procedures that are classified as severe severity (avsevärd svårhetsgrad) or for procedures where the veterinarian has requested to be informed prior start.
    a. This can be done via task in tick@lab or via an email to vet@km.ki.se. Please include what procedure will be done.

Practical information for using paper journals

Experiment journals must be continuously updated during the experiment. How often and with what depends on the ethics license. For highest severity, veterinarian must be informed one week prior initiation to decide how s/he should be involved in the experiment.

Non-recovery experiment (Terminal or Terminal+organ).

The severity level terminal + organ can only be used for animals that are killed without any interventions, e.g. for tissue, embryo collection., and add euthanasia method. Animals that undergo any procedures including under anaesthesia and/or develops an adverse phenotype must be reported with another suitable severity level.

The severity level terminal can only be used for animals that never wakes up from anaesthesia, i.e. non-recovery experiments where all procedures. This severity level may also be used if an animal under anaesthesia are terminated due to humane endpoint reached instead of waking up e.g. something went wrong during surgery.

Below information must be included in the paper journal:

1. Date of experiment.
2. Number of animals including id-numbers if applicable.
3. Experimental procedure e.g. tissue collection, anaesthesia including starting time, duration and what procure/s was done prior termination.
4. Severity level
5. Name and signature of the person performing the procedure must be clearly stated.

Recovery experiment (Mild, Moderate, or Severe).

The severity levels mild, moderate, and severe are used for all experiments where animals undergo recovery experiments e.g. gavage, injections, administration of various substance and diets, anaesthesia allowing animals to wake up, behaviour tests. The actual severity level is determined when the entire experiment is ended and must reflect the animal´s suffering during the entire experiment. Several factors influence what the actual severity level is e.g. combination of procedures, type of procedure, phenotypes, duration, measures taken to reduce suffering.

Below information must be included in the paper journal:

1. Date of experiment.
2. Number of animals used, including ID numbers if applicable.
3. Description of experimental procedure/s e.g. insertion of catheter under anaesthesia, surgery transplanting cells under kidney capsule under anaesthesia, oral gavage including what and volume, injection including what, where and volume, fasting animals, special diet or fluid; required post-surgery health inspection.
4. Always include date and time for e.g. procedure, anaesthesia, analgesia, administration of compound.
5. Inspection of animal health: Include date + note about animal health (e.g. weight monitoring, fur, body posture, other health check-ups are to be logged).
6. Subsequent treatment: Date, animal ID, action taken are to be logged.
7. Severity level
8. Euthanasia method.
9. Name and signature of the person performing the procedure must be clearly stated.