



**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE #505  
ENVIRONMENTAL ENRICHMENT  
PROGRAM FOR HAMSTERS**

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**1. PURPOSE**

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The intent of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to describe an appropriate environmental enrichment program for hamsters.

**2. RESPONSIBILITY**

3.6.2. Additional elements may include:

- 3.6.2.1. Features to promote activity such as structures to climb on or around, exercise wheels, etc.
- 3.6.2.2. Structures for hiding or avoidance such as shelters, tubes, or dividers
- 3.6.2.3. Substrates for burrowing
- 3.6.2.4. Objects to chew such as nylon bones or wooden blocks
- 3.6.2.5. Variety in food (e.g., fruits, vegetables, cereal, or treats)
- 3.6.2.6. Selected food items in the bedding to encourage foraging

3.7. Exemption:

- 3.7.1. Exemption from this environmental enrichment program must be justified and approved by the FACC, or prescribed for medical reasons.

**SOP REVISION HISTORY**

DATE	NEW VERSION
2023.03.06	2. Responsibility Facility Animal Care Committees (FACC), <del>veterinarian</del> , principal investigators (PIs), animal care staff.
2023.03.06	3.2.1. Pair <del>or group</del> house hamsters of the same gender. 3.2.2. Mice may be singly housed <b>with strong scientific, welfare or medical justification in some cases:</b> 3.2.2.1. Incompatibility ( <b>aggression</b> )
2023.03.06	3.3.1. Animals should be housed with the goal of maximizing species-specific behaviors, minimizing stress-induced behaviors, <b>providing opportunity for social contact and locomotor and exploratory behaviors.</b>
2023.03.06	3.3.3. Housing system should <b>meet or exceed</b> the minimal space <b>and height</b> recommendations <b>of the current Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) Guidelines</b> for a standard hamster cage ( <del>143 sq. inches</del> ). <del>3.3.3.1. One female with one litter, until weaning.</del> <del>3.3.3.2. Do not exceed 400g (total weight of all hamsters) per cage.</del>
2023.03.06	<del>3.6. Objects:</del> <del>3.6.1. Nesting material:</del> 3.5. Shelters and nesting material: 3.5.1. Shelters and nesting material <b>address the behavioral needs of hamsters and provide comfort for the animals.</b> 3.5.1.1. Provide nesting material (e.g., looser paper strands such as Enviro-Dri , NESTLET®, corn husk, shredded aspen) in every cage. 3.5.1.2. Provide a cellulose-based (preferable) or plastic shelter in every cage. 3.5.1.3. Transfer <del>the nest</del> nesting material to the clean cage <del>with the animals</del> during cage change, add additional nesting material and provide a new shelter if necessary.
2023.03.06	<del>3.6.1. Chewing device:</del> 3.6.1.1. Provide a chewing device (e.g. nylon bone, <del>hardwood block</del> ). 3.6. Other environmental enrichment items: 3.6.1.
2023.03.06	