Guiding Principles in the Use of Animals in Toxicology

Adopted by the Society of Toxicology in July 1989–Amended December 2008

1. The use, care and transportation of animals for toxicological research, training, and testing for the purpose of protecting human and animal health and the environment must comply with all applicable animal welfare laws.
2. When scientifically appropriate, alternative procedures that reduce the number of animals used, refine the use of whole animals or replace whole animals (e.g., in vitro models, invertebrate organisms) should be considered.
3. For research requiring the use of animals, the species should be carefully selected and the number of animals kept to the minimum required to achieve scientifically valid results.
4. All reasonable steps should be taken to avoid or minimize discomfort, distress or pain of animals.
5. Appropriate aseptic technique, anesthesia and postoperative analgesia should be provided if a surgical procedure is required. Muscle relaxants or paralytics are not to be used in place of anesthetics.
6. Care and handling of all animals used for research purposes must be directed by veterinarians or other individuals trained and experienced in the proper care, handling and use of the species being maintained or studied. Veterinary care is to be provided in a timely manner when needed.
7. Investigators and other personnel shall be qualified and trained appropriately for conducting procedures on living animals, including training in the proper and humane care and use of laboratory animals.
8. Protocols involving the use of animals are to be reviewed and approved by an institutional animal care and use committee before being initiated. The composition and function of the committee shall be in compliance with applicable animal welfare laws, regulations, guidelines and policies.
9. Euthanasia shall be conducted according to the most current guidelines of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Panel on Euthanasia or similar bodies in different countries.