I. PURPOSE:
   A. ULAM recognizes that animal research subjects represent valuable components of each research project. Therefore, it is important to consider methods to help maintain and safeguard research data that each animal may represent. However, it is also imperative that the overall welfare of each research animal be maintained. At times, the most appropriate treatment that can be provided to an animal is euthanasia. As outlined in the University of Michigan University Committee on the Use and Care of Animals (UCUCA) policy, “UCUCA Policy for End-Stage Illness and Humane Endpoints,” any moribund animal is “considered to have end-stage illness and should be euthanized immediately.” Other research subjects that display a debilitating physical state should also be considered for euthanasia. Some examples may include but not be limited to severe fight wounds, dystocia, injury or severe dermatitis.

   B. Animals with conditions requiring euthanasia may be first identified by ULAM veterinary or husbandry staff.

   C. The intent of this document is to establish the policy for the euthanasia of any research subject by the ULAM veterinary staff when it is determined that euthanasia is the most humane treatment to provide. Information is also provided on the appropriate means to communicate with laboratories regarding specific animal cases.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES:
   A. It is the responsibility of all individuals directly involved in animal research to consider and provide for the welfare of rodent research subjects within the confines of a UCUCA-approved animal research protocol.

   B. It is the responsibility of all ULAM veterinary personnel and University laboratory personnel to work in concert to minimize the pain and distress experienced by rodent research subjects while also facilitating the conduct of high quality research.

      1. ULAM veterinary staff must adequately communicate with laboratory personnel so that labs are aware of past or proposed actions or treatments that may influence the research results.

      2. Laboratory personnel must communicate with ULAM veterinary staff to facilitate the provision of adequate and humane veterinary care.

III. DEFINITIONS:
   A. Exception- An exception is a document that describes a deviation from a normal policy, regulation, or nationally accepted standard.
B. **Euthanasia Notification** - An exception in which the lab personnel or PI would like to be contacted prior to the veterinary technician euthanizing a moribund animal.

C. **Death Notification Exception** - An exception in which the appropriate lab personnel would like to be contacted after an animal is found dead by the veterinary technician or husbandry or after it is euthanized by the veterinary technician.

D. **Moribund** – In a state of dying.

E. **Moribundity** – The state or quality of being on the verge of death.

IV. **PROCEDURES:**

A. **Standard Procedure Enacted when a Moribund Animal is Identified by ULAM Veterinary Staff**

1. Unless other arrangements have been formalized through a ULAM Exception, all animals identified to be moribund by ULAM veterinary staff (veterinary technicians, veterinary residents, or veterinary faculty) will be immediately euthanized. The euthanasia will be noted on the death log located within the animal housing room and on the appropriate cage card. If it is the last animal in the cage, the veterinary technicians will mark the date of death/euthanasia on the cage card and place the cage card in the deactivation box. The animal carcass will be labeled and put in the designated carcass cooler for that area in a bin labeled with the date. The animal carcass will be kept for 72 hours and then discarded with other animal tissues.

B. **Standard Procedure Enacted When an Animal is Identified for Euthanasia by ULAM Veterinary Staff for Reasons Other Than Morbundity**

1. If the Veterinary staff observes an animal that requires euthanasia, the following steps will be followed:

   a. The effort to call and/or email the appropriate person (lab contact or principal investigator) will occur. A clear message would be provided including the room number, cage location, building, reason why euthanasia is being suggested, dates and time as to when the animal must be euthanized, and if not completed the Veterinary staff will euthanize the animal.

   b. After the time limit has expired, a follow up visit will be performed by the Veterinary staff no later than the end of the workday to ensure the animal was euthanized. If the animal was not euthanized by the stated date and time the veterinary technician would euthanize the animal and charge the principal investigator (See Recharges for Veterinary Services SOP).

   c. Lab contacts and principal investigators can contact the veterinary staff to further discuss recommendations and or treatment prior to euthanasia. After the initial evaluation, based upon the animal's current condition, the veterinary staff may extend the euthanasia deadline.

2. The euthanasia will be noted on the death log located within the animal housing room and on the appropriate cage card. If it is the last animal in the
cage, the veterinary technicians will mark the date of death/euthanasia on the
cage card and place the cage card in the deactivation box. The animal
carcass will be labeled and put in the designated carcass cooler for that area
in a bin labeled with the date. The animal carcass will be kept for 72 hours
and then discarded with other animal tissues.

C. **ULAM Exception for Laboratory Staff to be Notified Prior to Animal
Euthanasia (Euthanasia Notification)**

1. If an investigator would like to be notified prior to euthanasia of a moribund
animal, the responsible laboratory personnel must submit an exception. For
more information on how to submit an exception, please visit the UCUCA
website at [www.ucuca.umich.edu](http://www.ucuca.umich.edu). All pertinent contacts (names, phone
numbers, email addresses) including weekend and holiday contacts must be
listed on the exception. The veterinary staff will make a reasonable effort to
contact the appropriate person(s) prior to euthanasia.

2. If the responsible personnel are contacted, the veterinary staff must indicate
the time by which the animal must be euthanized by the laboratory staff.
Alternatively, the veterinary technician will euthanize the mouse per
instruction from the responsible laboratory personnel. The veterinary
technician must ensure that the mouse has been euthanized by the
laboratory staff within the timeframe discussed with the laboratory. If the
animal has not been euthanized by this time, a veterinary staff member will
immediately euthanize the animal and follow the procedures as outlined in
section 3, below.

3. If no one can be reached immediately or the animal has not been euthanized
in a timely manner, the veterinary technician will euthanize the animal, record
the animal on the death log and the cage card, and notify the responsible
person via email or voice mail of the action taken and the location of the
carcass.

D. **ULAM Exception for Laboratory Staff to be Notified If An Animal is Found
Dead or Following Euthanasia (Death Notification Exception)**

1. If an investigator has a death notification exception in place, the veterinary
staff will notify the responsible personnel listed on the exception when an
animal is found dead or euthanized because of a moribund condition.

E. **Involvement of Veterinary Residents or Veterinary Faculty**

1. If an agreement between the veterinary technician and the laboratory
personnel cannot be reached, the veterinary residents and/or faculty
veterinarians must be contacted for further investigation.

F. **Live animals found in carcass cooler**

1. If an animal is found alive in the cooler it should be euthanized immediately.
As much information regarding the animal and where it may have come from
should be sent to the area husbandry supervisor as well as the veterinary
resident, and UCUCA.