Social housing is the default method of housing animals unless otherwise justified based on social incompatibility resulting from inappropriate behavior, veterinary concerns, or scientific necessity approved by the IACUC.

**Regulations:**

*Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, ILAR, NAS, 2011, pg 64:* Single housing of social species should be the exception and justified based on experimental requirements or veterinary-related concerns about animal well-being.

**Policy:**

Social housing is the default method of housing unless otherwise justified based on social incompatibility resulting from inappropriate behavior, veterinary concerns, or scientific necessity approved by the IACUC. In general, social animals must be housed in stable pairs or groups of compatible individuals. If singly housing animals is deemed necessary, it should be limited to the minimum period necessary. During single housing, where possible, visual, auditory, olfactory and, depending on the species, protected tactile contact with compatible conspecifics should be provided. In the absence of other animals, additional enrichment should be offered, such as positive interaction with humans, periodic release into larger enclosures, supplemental enrichment items, and/or the addition of a companion animal in the room or housing area.

**Exceptions:**

Social animals may need to be singly housed for a variety of reasons. The general categories of exceptions to social housing and the IACUC approval requirements for each:

Standard animal husbandry and management practices: The IACUC approves single housing of social animals for situations where attempts to socially house the animals could jeopardize animal welfare. When animals are single housed for the above reason, a specific justification in the animal use protocol and case by case approval by the IACUC are not required.

Examples of such situations include, but are not limited to:

- Separation of aggressive or incompatible conspecifics
- Individual housing due to attrition of cage/pen mates
- Separation of pregnant females due to pending parturition
• Breeder animal between matings
• Lone male or female weanling
• Fasting prior to surgery or another procedure requiring anesthesia
• Post-operative recovery (short term < 14 days)
• Unfamiliar male mice, intact male rabbits, or female hamsters
• No socially-compatible animal available to place with a single-housed animal
• Individual housing during conditioning/acclimating/quarantine

Clinical reasons: CLAMC veterinarians may require individual housing of animals when it is for medical concerns. In such cases, IACUC approval is not required.

Experimental Requirements: When the single housing of social species (other than short term recovery from experimental manipulation) is necessitated for experimental reasons, a scientific justification must be described in the animal use protocol and approved by the IACUC.

References
A. Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals- 8th edition, NRC
B. AAALAC Position Statement on Social Housing
http://www.aaalac.org/accreditation/positionstatements.cfm#social