



Society for Neuroscience
Talking Points to Guide Discussions of *Best Practices* with University Administration

Nearly twice as many attacks were reported in 2007 as in entire five-year span from 1999-2003.

SfN members reported 11 attacks in 2007 and just 6 between 1999 and 2003. The attacks have also become more violent and brazen.

Animal models are essential tools to pursuing groundbreaking research. Animal research has led to important advances in understanding the nervous system and its disorders. Among these are the developments of: a vaccine against polio; medications for the effective treatment of depression, schizophrenia and obsessive-compulsive disorder; advances in the treatment of Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, stroke, sleep disorders, and hearing; and new drugs for the treatment of pain and epilepsy.

***Best Practices* is designed to enhance the institution's emergency management and preparedness plans, with the goal of better protecting employees.** *Best Practices* strives to add protections to plans to ensure that researchers can perform their work and live in a safe environment. Gaps in protective coverage between campus and local police exist, and sometimes with hazardous results.

If the rate of attacks continues to grow, research institutions could begin to lose talented researchers and the grants they manage. Talented researchers with revolutionary ideas are essential to an institution's pursuit of scientific knowledge, as well as a country's stake in the increasingly competitive biomedical sciences fields. It is in an institution's best interest to provide a safe and thriving research atmosphere for their researchers.

The financial loss to institutions brought about by attacks is significant. While we do not have complete estimates for the annual cost of attacks to research institutions, it is clear that additional security personnel and/or technology are costly, not to mention the costs in terms of lost research advances. Beyond financial issues, attacks result in a high-stress atmosphere and a serious emotional toll on employees. It's important to remember that these attacks can often affect all staff in a department, and the university community at large. Depending on the severity of the attacks, safety and security of employees and students not directly involved in controversial research may be at risk as well.

Federally-funded neuroscientists are frequently targeted by anti-animal research extremists. Research in neuroscience relies heavily on the use of the animal model to develop therapies and treatments for those suffering from brain diseases and disorders. The receipt of federal funds requires that their names and nature of their research be made public, enabling animal rights extremists easy access to data needed to launch a campaign.

***Best Practices* provides recommendations in three areas: Safety and security, communications, and administration.** SfN's intention in drafting this document was to present a full slate of recommendations that seek to address the range of problems that arise when a researcher or institution is attacked.

Implementation of *Best Practices* in no way infringes on free speech. SfN was very careful to follow the lead of Congress with the American Enterprise Terrorism Act and not contradict the individual rights guaranteed by the First Amendment. *Best Practices* is not meant to curb discussion and stop demonstrations, just to help address illegal, violent actions.