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## 40 C.F.R. § 798.6500

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### Schedule-controlled operant behavior.

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(a) *Purpose.* (1) In the assessment and evaluation of the potential human health effects of substances, it may be necessary to test for functional neurotoxic effects. Substances that have been observed to produce neurotoxic signs in other toxicity studies (e.g. CNS depression or stimulation), as well as substances with a structural similarity to known neurotoxicants should be evaluated for these effects.

(2) This guideline defines procedures for conducting studies of schedule-controlled operant behavior, one way of evaluating functional neurotoxic effects (Dews, 1972 under paragraph (f)(1) of this section; NAS 1975, 1977, 1982 under paragraphs (f)(4), (5) and (6) of this section). Our purpose is to evaluate the effects of acute and repeated exposures on the rate and pattern of responding under schedules of reinforcement. Operant behavior tests may be used to evaluate many other aspects of behavior (Laties, 1978 under paragraph (f)(3) of this section). Additional tests may be necessary to completely assess the behavioral effects of any substance. Behavioral evaluation should be used in conjunction with neuropathologic evaluation and the evaluation of other toxic effects.

(b) *Definitions—*(1) *Neurotoxicity.* Neurotoxicity or a neurotoxic effect is an adverse change in the structure or function of the nervous system following exposure to a chemical agent. Behavioral toxicity is an adverse change in the functioning of the organism with respect to its environment following exposure to a chemical agent.

(2) *Operant, operant behavior, operant conditioning.* An operant is a class of behavioral responses which change or operates on the environment in the same way. Operant behavior is further distinguished as behavior which is modified by its consequences. Operant conditioning is the experimental procedure used to modify some class of behavior by reinforcement or punishment.

(3) *Schedule of reinforcement.* A schedule of reinforcement specifies the relation between behavioral responses and the delivery of reinforcers, such as food or water (Ferster and Skinner, 1957 under paragraph (f)(2) of this section). For example, a fixed ratio (FR) schedule requires a fixed number of responses to produce a reinforcer (e.g. FR 30). On a fixed interval (FI) schedule, the first response after a fixed period of time is reinforced (e.g. FI 5 minutes).

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