Purpose of Policy: The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the transportation of laboratory animals between facilities and laboratories is conducted in a manner safe for the animals and the public and to provide guidance to investigators on the proper means by which to accomplish this.

Policy Information: As stated in the National Research Council’s Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, animal transportation “should provide an appropriate level of animal biosecurity while minimizing zoonotic risks, protecting against environmental extremes, avoiding overcrowding, providing for the animals’ physical, physiologic or behavioral needs and comfort, and protecting the animals and personnel from physical trauma.” Biosecurity is defined by the Guide as “all measures taken to identify, contain, prevent and eradicate known or unknown infections that may cause clinical disease of alter physiologic and behavioral responses or otherwise make the animals unsuitable for research.”

Although it may be necessary to transport animals between vivaria, vivaria and laboratories, or between institutions either to maximize the use of space, achieve specific research goals or to engender collaborations between institutions, indiscriminate transportation of animals may jeopardize not only animal and human health but also research results. Therefore, transportation should be limited to that which is unavoidable.

The acquisition of all laboratory animals must be approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) prior to their arrival on campus. Whenever possible, investigators are encouraged to purchase animals from a list of IACUC-approved vendors that is available from the IACUC chair. Exceptions to this list must be approved by the IACUC.

Prior to transferring animals from another research institution, the investigator must submit a health report from the home institution for review and approval by the Attending Veterinarian. An Animal Transfer Form must also be submitted to the Attending Veterinarian prior to shipment. This form may be obtained from the Office of the IACUC (x-5619). Under no circumstances are laboratory animals to arrive on campus without IACUC approval and the authorization of the Attending Veterinarian.
Transportation is stressful on animals and should be kept to a minimum not only for the animals’ health but to maximize research results. Transporting and keeping animals in the laboratory for mere convenience is not permitted. If using a cart, it should be in good working order to minimize noise and vibration. Carts must also be cleaned and sanitized between uses to prevent cross-contamination that might facilitate disease transmission.

If animals must be transported out of doors, steps must be taken to avoid rain, cold, heat, bright lights and the public to the extent possible. If traveling through public areas, transfer containers must be made of or covered by opaque material. To prevent spillage or animal escape, cages should be secured in some manner.

Cages used with ventilation racks have filter tops with limited ventilation when not on the rack. Moreover, stacking these cages can block the filters and may cause animals to suffocate. Carbon dioxide, ammonia, heat and humidity will increase inside these cages when they are off of the rack or if the filter is obstructed all of which might affect research outcomes. Therefore, animals in cages used with ventilation racks must be monitored frequently when the cages are not on the racks.

Do not transport conscious animals to the same room where rodents are being operated, anesthetized or euthanized as such rodents emit odors and ultrasonic distress sounds that can add to the stress of transportation.

The method for transporting animals between off-campus facilities must be approved by the IACUC. Under no circumstances may animals be transported using public transportation. If transporting animals in a private vehicle, the following rules will be in effect:

- Containers must be appropriate for the species and properly ventilated.
- If possible, the animals’ home cages should be used to limit stress.
- The cages must be labeled with emergency contact information in case of an accident or emergency.
- Proper equipment for the recovery of escaped animals must be carried in the vehicle.
- Heating and air conditioning must be used as needed.
- If the animals will be in the vehicle for a prolonged period of time, a source of food and water must be available to the animals unless restriction is part of the approved IACUC protocol.
- **Animals must never be left in an unattended vehicle.**
- Animals must be protected from direct sunlight and public view.
- For USDA covered species, the vehicle must be inspected and approved by the IACUC.

**Related Policies:** IACUC Policy No. 2014-049; Acclimation & Quarantine