



POLICY

TITLE:	Transport and Receipt of Laboratory Animals
Policy Number:	2014-021
Responsible Department:	Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
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Approval Date:	8/13/14
Reviewed:	7/12/17; 3/11/2020
Revised:	7/12/17 (vehicle must be approved by IACUC for transport of any species; deleted for USDA-covered species only); 9/18/19 (added conditions re: use of private vehicle and comments re: transporting wildlife); 3/11/2020 (Added: notify IACUC areas where animals kept longer than permitted by USDA or OLAW; don't leave cages stacked > one hr)

Purpose of Policy: 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 or alter physiologic and behavioral responses or otherwise make the animals unsuitable for research."

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 (AV). An Animal Transfer Form must also be submitted to the AV 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 AV.**

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. 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. Any area where animals are kept for over 12 hours (per the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)) or 24 hours (per the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW)), requires notification of the IACUC such that required inspections can take place.

If using a cart, it should be in good working order to minimize noise and vibration. Avoid stacking cages as much as possible so as not to reduce air circulation. In particular, cages used with ventilation racks have filter tops with limited ventilation when not on the rack. 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. Stacking can also lead to cart instability. If cages must be stacked, place them on the lower shelves of the cart. Cages should not remain stacked for more than one hour. 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 public view 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. Assure that all cage lids, tops or doors are securely closed. **Under no circumstances may animals be left unattended during transport regardless of the mode of transport.**

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 (more than four hours), 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.
- Animals treated with a hazardous agent may not be transported in a private vehicle.
- Eating, drinking or smoking in the vehicle is not permitted during animal transport.
- **The transport vehicle must be inspected and approved by the IACUC.**

Transport of wildlife from where they were trapped to the housing facility must comply with local, state and federal regulations and, in keeping with vivarium health standards and requirements, have

AV approval. Consult with the veterinarian or a trained scientist with species-specific experience for guidance.

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