Transportation of Research Animals

Policy: Rodent species may be transported to IACUC-approved use sites (laboratories) by research personnel following the guidelines below. Non-rodent mammals may be transferred by research personnel only via internal corridors; transport of non-rodent mammals outdoors must be conducted by RRF personnel. Animals may be transported outside centrally-managed facilities only when necessary and transportation must be planned to minimize transit time. Live animals cannot remain outside of RRF vivaria for more than 12 hours unless specifically approved in an IACUC Proposal (see “Laboratory and Satellite Rodent Housing” policy). Transportation of animals from UofL animal facilities to another institution requires coordination between institutions and prior approval from both institutions; the RRF Import/Export Coordinator should be contacted to arrange interinstitutional transport.

Rationale: Federal regulations and national guidelines stipulate that all animal use, including housing and transportation, support species-specific behaviors. The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals² states: “Careful planning for all types of transportation should occur to ensure animal safety and well-being. The process of 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.” Transport and use of animals outside facilities specifically designed for such use provides an opportunity for animal distress and may have a negative impact on research data. Furthermore, transport through public areas creates the potential for negative publicity and potentially exposes personnel to risks not mitigated by the institutional occupational health and safety program. To ensure animal welfare and personnel safety, the IACUC requires that special provisions be met regarding the transportation of animals outside of RRF housing rooms.

Definitions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home Cage</td>
<td>Cage in which rodents are routinely housed within the RRF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vivarium/Vivaria</td>
<td>RRF housing facility(ies)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary Enclosure</td>
<td>Device used for animal containment with which there is direct contact with the animals</td>
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</table>

Procedures, Guidelines, and Exceptions:

1. Animals must be transported in a primary enclosure that follows Guide⁴ and AWAR³ recommended space allowances (i.e., cage density guidelines remain in place), allows adequate ventilation, provides a dark and secure environment, allows the animal to remain clean and dry, and is free of sharp edges or projections that could cause injury and easily sanitized. The home cage in which rodents are housed within the RRF meets these requirements and is usually recommended for use during transport. Consult with an RRF veterinarian prior to transport if information on requirements and proper transportation is needed.

2. The transport container must be secured such that it cannot be inadvertently opened during transit.

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Revision: 14 April 2011; 29 April 2014; 11 June 2019
Latest Approval: 20 June 2019
3. Transport containers must be covered with an opaque cover during transport to reduce animal distress, public view, and dispersal of allergens. The covers should not impede cage ventilation.

4. Transport containers and covers must be discarded or sanitized between uses. Home cages used as transport containers must be returned to a designated area of the RRF within 1 day.

5. Any person transporting animals must be approved to handle animals by appropriate inclusion as key study personnel on the applicable IACUC-approved Proposal, or be a member of RRF staff.

6. Public transportation and the use of bicycles, motorcycles or motor scooters are not acceptable or permitted under any circumstance.

7. Food and a source of hydration should be provided if the animals are temporarily held prior to use and/or return to the vivarium of origin or if extramural transportation is involved.

8. Institutional Biosafety Committee approval is required for the transport of animals intentionally infected with a pathogen.

9. **Intramural Transportation**
   a. Procedures outlined in items 1 through 8 of this section must be followed.
   b. Personnel must use freight elevators when transporting animals.
   c. Transport containers may be placed on a cart if transport will be limited to internal corridors.
   d. Transportation must be immediate and direct, with no intentional stops en route.

10. **Extramural Transportation within Louisville**
    a. Procedures outlined in items 1 through 8 of this section must be followed.
    b. Outdoor transport must be avoided. If required, animals must be protected from environmental extremes.
       i. Transport of non-rodent mammals must be coordinated with the RRF.
       ii. Transport of rodents by research personnel is limited to hand-carrying of up to two cages per person. If more cages are to be transported than can be carried, transport must be performed by RRF staff.
    c. Carts must not be used for transport outdoors.
    d. Transportation of animals between UofL buildings more than a block away or during inclement weather should be arranged with RRF staff and RRF vehicles should be utilized to transport the animals.
    e. Transportation must be immediate and direct, with no intentional stops en route.
    f. RRF vehicles should be utilized for transportation within the city of Louisville, which can be arranged through the appropriate RRF facility supervisor.

11. **Extramural Transportation outside of Louisville**
    a. Procedures outlined in items 1 through 8 of this section must be followed.
    b. Transportation of animals between UofL animal facilities and other institution’s research facilities requires prior approval from both institutions. Transportation off-site must be included
in the applicable Proposal and approved by the IACUC prior to transport. The RRF Import/Export Coordinator should be contacted to arrange commercial animal transportation.

c. Use of special transport containers and private vehicles must be approved within the pertinent IACUC Proposal. The use of private vehicles for the transportation of animals is discouraged, though may be justified in an approved IACUC proposal. Private vehicles must be inspected by the IACUC before initial use and then every six months thereafter. Inspections can be arranged through the IACUC Office.

i. Vehicles must be climate-controlled to maintain the appropriate temperature for the animals.

ii. Animals must be transported in the passenger compartment only and the container used to transport animals must be secured to the vehicle.

iii. Animals must be protected from public observation at all times.

iv. Animals must be protected from direct exposure to the sun.

v. If coverings or secondary containers are used to protect animals from temperature extremes, direct sunlight, or visual observation, they must not inhibit ventilation.

vi. The vehicle should have sanitizable surfaces in any areas that could be in contact with the animals or equipment; the use of a sanitizable rubber mat or tarp is recommended.

vii. Proper precautions should be taken so that any potential spills are containable.

viii. The most direct route of travel should be taken.

ix. Bedding should be provided during transit. An RRF veterinarian should be consulted prior to travel to determine feed and water requirements.

x. Do not smoke in the vehicle or around the crates.

xi. A member of research staff should remain with or in the vehicle at all times when animals are on board.

xii. The driver of the vehicle must obtain and carry any permits needed for travel.

xiii. Other necessities are determined on a case-by-case basis by the IACUC after taking species and length of travel into consideration.

References:


