

## **Guidelines for the Transportation of Animals**

The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

*These guidelines have been written to assist faculty, staff, and students in performing vertebrate animal procedures in a humane manner and complying with pertinent regulatory requirements. Under some circumstances deviations from these procedures may be indicated but such variances must be approved in advance by the IACUC.*

This document provides information to be used when planning and performing the transportation of vertebrate animals used for research, teaching, or other purposes at The University of Texas at Austin. It is organized into five sections:

- Section A – Basic Principles
- Section B – Vehicle Transport Between Facilities
- Section C – Vehicle Transport Using Private Vehicles
- Section D – Long-Distance Transport or Transport of Wildlife
- Section E – Acknowledgements & References

### **Section A – Basic Principles**

The following are requirements for the transportation of animals from holding facilities to laboratory locations (in the same building or elsewhere on campus) for experimental use and their subsequent return. All transportation must be described in the IACUC approved protocol. PLEASE NOTE: Animals cannot be housed outside of their normal holding location for greater than twelve hours without the specific approval of the IACUC.

- 1) Transport animals **DIRECTLY** from their holding room to the laboratory use location. Assure that all lids, tops, or doors in the cage or transport enclosure are closed and secure.
- 2) If a cart is used, minimize noise and vibration by using a cart with wheels in good repair. Avoid stacking cages, since it can decrease air circulation and can lead to instability on the cart. Place cages on second and/or lower tiers of cart, whenever possible, which leaves top shelf to support the weight of the drape or cover.
- 3) Drape cages, carts or carriers with an opaque sheet or otherwise ensure animals and cages are shielded in such a way as to be non-stressful to the animals and to minimize animals from public view. If paper drapes are used, they should be discarded and replaced when soiled. Cloth drapes should be laundered on a regular basis. Care must be taken to assure appropriate ventilation. Plastic sheeting must be used carefully to assure appropriate ventilation. Placing non-aquatic animals within plastic bags is not appropriate.
- 4) Do not leave animals unattended during transport.
- 5) Return all caging, dirty bedding, and discarded carcasses to an appropriate location at the end of experimental procedures.
- 6) Transport vehicles and carts must be cleaned and sanitized between uses to prevent cross-contamination that may result in infectious disease transmission.

- 7) Texas weather is subject to occasional extremes that can affect animals being transported outdoors. Animals must be protected from direct sunlight during transport and sheltered from any rain, snow or sleet. Most animals can tolerate exposure to temperatures between 45 and 85 degrees F during short- term transportation on campus, but when temperatures are above or below that range exposure should be brief and supplemental heating or cooling for transport may be required depending on the species involved. Contact the Animal Resource Center for more information and advice on transportation options available when adverse weather is a factor.
- 8) Transportation of large mammals (or large numbers of rodents) should be discussed with the ARC Facilities Manager to determine the appropriate procedures. The ARC must also be contacted to approve any requests for use of motor vehicles to transport animals to or from the centralized facilities. ARC staff will transport animals at no charge when they are moved between ARC-managed vivariums. This service can be requested by submitting an “[Animal Transfer/Transport Form](#).”
- 9) Transportation of hazardous live or dead animals (venomous, radioactive, or potentially excreting chemical or biological hazards) must be discussed in advance with the Office of Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) and or the HealthPoint Occupational Health Program (OHP) to assure safety.

## **Section B – Vehicle Transport Between Facilities**

ARC staff are authorized to routinely transport laboratory animals in vehicles between UT facilities or to / from other institutions. Contact the Animal Resources Center (ARC) Facilities Manager for more information at (512) 471-7534.

The use of private vehicles is strongly discouraged as a means to transport laboratory animals as it presents a risk of contamination due to exposure to allergens, zoonoses, and other hazards associated with animal exposure. It can also be stressful to the animals. However, the IACUC recognizes that there are circumstances in which this is unavoidable, such as emergency transportation across campus during conditions of inclement weather, or when wild-caught animals are brought in from distant field locations. Under these circumstances, the IACUC requires investigators to first contact the ARC to verify that there are no alternatives and to assure that the proper precautions are being taken for transportation prior to using a private vehicle. See Section C of this guideline for more information regarding University policy covering the transport of animals using personal vehicles.

For more information regarding crating and transporting various species, please refer to: <http://lan.sagepub.com/content/39/1/1.full.pdf>

## **Section C – Vehicle Transport Using Private Vehicles**

According to UTS 157: *Automobile Insurance Coverage for Officers and Employees and General Requirements for the Use of Vehicles*,

Employees are strongly discouraged from using personal vehicles for conducting Official University Business. Each Institution is responsible for informing employees that their personal auto insurance will be primary at all times when the employee utilizes their own vehicle to conduct Official University Business. Additionally, each employee should be informed of the following:

- i. That they must carry auto liability insurance that meets the minimum requirements in their state of residence; and
- ii. That the U. T. System Hired/Non-Owned insurance coverage is secondary to the employee’s personal

auto liability insurance in the event of any claim or litigation.

If private vehicle transportation must be used (i.e. for one of the reasons listed above) the investigator should provide an appropriate level of animal biosecurity (contact EHS for additional recommendations: (512) 471-3511), ensure the protection of the animals (contact ARC for additional recommendations: (512) 471-7534), and protect research personnel from injury.

- 1) The vehicle must be operated by personnel listed on the IACUC protocol.
- 2) Containers must comply with the following: able to be sanitized; spill proof, preventing waste from falling outside the container; secure and escape proof; provide adequate ventilation; have a solid floor; and be free of sharp edges that could harm the animal.
- 3) Animal transport cages should not be overcrowded, and the animals have sufficient floor space to make normal postural movements.
- 4) Non-research personnel are prohibited from being in the vehicle when animals are being transported.
- 5) Animals that have been treated with hazardous agents (i.e., biological, chemical, radiological) shall not be transported in a private vehicle.
- 6) Vehicles carrying laboratory animals should be suitable for the purpose, insulated and fitted with controllable heating, cooling and ventilation and have internal lighting. The interior of the cargo area must be designed to allow for a thorough cleaning and disinfection after each transport. A plastic barrier should be placed between the cage/crate and the vehicle. Cages/crates should be secured with a seatbelt or bungee cord.
- 7) The persons responsible for transportation should have a mobile phone, consult with individuals knowledgeable about the transport of the species, and minimize transport times by careful planning of the route and avoiding any delays. Animals should not be left unattended. If a stop is necessary (restroom), animals should not be visible or in direct sunlight.
- 8) No eating, drinking, or smoking while transporting animals.
- 9) Using these guidelines, the research lab must develop a written SOP that includes the names of persons authorized to transport the animals and the ID of vehicles that may be used. The SOP must be approved and the vehicles pre-screened by the ARC (with EHS input when indicated) prior to transport.

## **Section D – Long-Distance Transport or Transport of Wildlife**

Consult with ARC veterinarians or trained scientists with species-specific experience for the transport recommendations for individual species. Using these guidelines, the research lab must develop a written SOP that includes the names of persons authorized to transport the animals and the ID of vehicles that may be used. The SOP must be approved and the vehicles pre-screened by the ARC (with EHS input when indicated) prior to transport.

- 1) Wildlife transportation from the site of trapping to the housing facility must comply with local, state and federal laws and regulations.
- 2) Wildlife transport should be a planned activity and the proper vehicle should be used.

- 3) Transport time and distance should be kept to a minimum.
- 4) It is important to consider the climate, season and time of day when animals will be traveling.
- 5) For trips exceeding a few hours, the animal shipping containers must comply with the following: not be overcrowded; have sufficient floor space to make normal postural movements; have a sufficient supply of food and water; contain sufficient bedding; and maintain an environment that minimizes stress.
- 6) Vehicles carrying animals should be suitable for the purpose, insulated and fitted with controllable heating, cooling and ventilation, have internal lighting, and the interior of the cargo area must be designed to allow for a thorough cleaning and disinfection after each transport.

## **Section E – Acknowledgements & References**

This document contains content that was adapted from materials obtained from Stanford University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

“UTS 157: Automobile Insurance Coverage for Officers and Employees and General Requirements for the Use of Vehicles.” UT System Policy Library, The University of Texas System, 7 Jan. 2019, [www.utsystem.edu/sites/policy-library/policies/uts-157-automobile-insurance-coverage-officers-and-employees-and-general-requirements-use-of-vehicles](http://www.utsystem.edu/sites/policy-library/policies/uts-157-automobile-insurance-coverage-officers-and-employees-and-general-requirements-use-of-vehicles).

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<b>Approval Date</b>	<b>Major Change(s) Approved</b>
04/05/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section C – Policy UTS 157 text cited in guideline</li> <li>• Section E – Policy UTS 157 citation added</li> </ul>