

Office of Research Support and Compliance

Vice President for Research, Scholarship and Creative Endeavors

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 – Requirements and Transportation Considerations

Section B – Vehicle Transport Using Private Vehicles

Section C – Acknowledgements & References

Section A – Requirements and Transportation Considerations

The purpose of this policy is to describe the requirements for movement of animals on and off campus, between campus buildings, and within areas outside the vivarium space.

The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (the Guide, NRC 2011) 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." (p. 107)

Implementation of appropriate handling procedures reduces spread of disease, exposure to allergens, and ensures safety and well-being of the animals during transport.

Policy:

Please note, ARC staff will transport animals at no charge when they are moved between ARC-managed vivaria. This service can be requested by submitting an [ARC Animal Transfer/Transport Form](#).

- 1) Transportation of animals from vivarium space to a procedure room or laboratory space outside of the vivarium within the same building does not need to be described in the animal use protocol for facilities where animals are eligible to return to the housing area after departure.
- 2) Non-ARC managed transportation of animals between buildings must be described in the IACUC approved protocol, and any exceptions to the transportation considerations listed below must be described.
- 3) **Use of personal vehicles for the transportation of research animals is highly discouraged.** If animals will be transported by personal vehicles, justification for the use of a personal vehicle must be approved by

the IACUC (in the animal use protocol). Using the guidelines below, a Private Vehicle Transport SOP must be developed and attached to the associated IACUC protocol.

- 4) Transportation of animals to or from another institution requires the use of a commercial transportation service and should be coordinated ARC staff. Prior approval from veterinary staff is necessary in advance of bringing animals on campus from a non-approved source (not a commercial vendor). See ARC FAQ's (link) for information about animal import or export
- 5) All methods of transportation must ensure animal health and safety. All animals must be alert and mobile (not sedated or anesthetized) during the transportation process unless described and approved in the IACUC protocol, or recommended for clinical reasons by the vetstaff.
- 6) Efforts should be taken to ensure the transportation time is minimized and public areas avoided. Public or university transportation systems cannot be used to transport animals between campus locations.
- 7) If transporting USDA covered animals, additional considerations may be necessary and ARC veterinary staff must be involved in the planning for movement of these animals.

Transportation Considerations:

- 1) Efforts should be taken to minimize stress during the transportation process.
- 2) Animals should not be removed from the vivarium space for >12 hours (USDA covered) or >24 hours (non-USDA covered) unless the area has been inspected and approved for housing on an approved IACUC protocol.
- 3) Do not leave animals unattended during transport.
- 4) Animals can only be transported together within the same primary container if they are a stable group. Animals cannot be placed in groups of unfamiliar animals for transport purposes. Animals of different species cannot be placed in the same primary container for transportation.
- 5) Transport animals directly from their holding room to the laboratory use location to minimize the time in transport. Assure that all lids, tops, or doors on the cage or transport enclosure are closed and secure prior to transport.
- 6) If animals have water bottles on their cages, bottles need to be inverted prior to transport and returned to normal position once the destination is reached.
- 7) Rodents must have a filter top on their cages during transportation. If transporting by vehicle, the lid must be secured by using a large rubber band, bungee cord, autoclave tape, etc.
- 8) Non-rodent species must be placed into an appropriate transport carrier for movement outside of the vivarium space. 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. For questions about suitability of a transport container, contact the ARC vetstaff.
- 9) Ensure animals are protected from temperature extremes during the transportation process. 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.

- 10) Animals must not be visible to passersby when moving outside of the vivarium space. When animals are transported outside of the vivarium, the cages should be placed into a secondary container or covered with an opaque drape and placed on a cart to 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. Animals must be removed from the secondary transport container immediately upon arrival at their expected destination.
- 11) If a cart is used for transportation, 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. Carts that enter the vivarium should be cleaned with accelerated hydrogen peroxide process before entering the animal rooms.
- 12) Animals which are exposed to biological, chemical, or radiation hazards must have transportation approved by EHS staff and guidance provided regarding the safe movement of these animals. If animals exposed to hazards are moved between buildings on campus and require vehicular transportation, the ARC must move the animals.
- 13) All caging equipment brought to laboratory space (empty dirty cages) must be promptly returned to the vivarium dirty cage wash for appropriate sanitation. These items cannot be left within the laboratory space.
- 14) Discard carcasses in an appropriate location at the end of experimental procedures.

Section B –Personal Vehicle transportation

Use of personal vehicles for animal transportation is discouraged due to potential allergen and pathogen contamination of the vehicle. In addition to the considerations above, the guidelines below apply to transportation of research animals in personal 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.
- 1) The investigator must ensure the protection of the animals and protect research personnel from injury. This involves providing an appropriate level of animal biosecurity (contact EHS for additional recommendations:

(512) 471-3511). Animals that have been treated with hazardous agents (i.e., biological, chemical, radiological) shall not be transported in a private vehicle. Transportation of hazardous live or dead animals (venomous, etc.) must be discussed in advance with the Office of Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) and or the HealthPoint Occupational Health Program (OHP) to assure safety.

- 2) The vehicle must be operated by personnel listed on the IACUC protocol. Non-research personnel are prohibited from being in the vehicle when animals are being transported.
- 3) Cages/carriers should not be opened within the vehicle.
- 4) Vehicles carrying laboratory animals should be insulated and fitted with controllable heating, cooling, and ventilation and have internal lighting. The vehicle must have a mechanism to maintain a thermoneutral environment during transport. The vehicle must reach a comfortable temperature prior to placing animals for transport.
- 5) The vehicle should be clean and uncluttered. Animals must be transported within passenger compartment of vehicle (not in truck beds or enclosed trunks). 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.
- 6) The persons responsible for transportation should minimize transport times by careful planning of the route and avoiding any delays. Animals should never be left unattended. If a stop is necessary (restroom), animals should not be visible or in direct sunlight.
- 7) No eating, drinking, or smoking should take place in the vehicle while transporting animals.
- 8) Vehicles used for animal transport must be made available for IACUC inspection upon request.
- 9) USDA-covered animals should not be transported via personnel vehicle, and laboratories requiring this transportation must make transport arrangements with ARC vetstaff.
 - i. The IACUC recognizes that there are circumstances where this is unavoidable, such as when wild-caught animals are brought in from distant field locations. Under these circumstances, the IACUC requires this transportation be described in the approved IACUC protocol to ensure there are no alternatives and to assure that the proper precautions are being taken for transportation prior to using a private vehicle.
- 10) Wildlife transportation from the site of trapping to the housing facility must comply with this policy as well as with local, state and federal laws and regulations.

Section C – Acknowledgements & References

References:

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

1. “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/policylibrary/policies/uts-157-automobile-insurance-coverage-officers-and-employees-and-general-requirements-use-ofvehicles.

Approval Date	Major Change(s) Approved
04/05/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Section C – Policy UTS 157 text cited in guideline• Section E – Policy UTS 157 citation added
03/04/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• IACUC animal transport guidelines combined with ARC animal transport guidelines. IACUC is now responsible for inspecting and approving all personal vehicles used for animal transport.