

BACKGROUND

Transportation of research animals is often necessary to accomplish research goals. These include, but are not limited to, transportation to the Principal Investigator's (PI) laboratory for survival studies; transportation to the PI laboratory for terminal studies; transportation to designated core equipment areas; and transportation to facilitate collaboration between investigators, either at the same or different institutions.

Transporting laboratory animals from one location to another can be stressful to the animals and can increase the potential for disease transmission or injury. *The Guide for Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* states that transportation "should be planned to minimize transit time and the risk of zoonoses, protect against environmental extremes, avoid overcrowding, provide food and water when indicated, and protect against physical trauma."

A number of concerns must be addressed in order to accomplish the transportation with minimum impact on animal welfare and study parameters and in accordance with regulatory guidelines. These include, but are not limited to, animal welfare; compliance with federal, state and local regulations; impact on the public perception of animal research; and containment of any zoonotic and hazardous agents. This Policy provides guidance on how to safely and effectively transport animals.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

In order to optimize research support as well as assuring animal welfare and regulatory compliance and safety, for animals, as well as for people, the University of Rhode Island (URI) IACUC has approved the policy that only URI Animal Care Technicians will perform rodent transport outside of animal facilities unless specifically approved by the Attending Veterinarian (AV).

When rodents need to be transferred between animal facilities and other locations on campus (e.g., PI laboratory, imaging facility), PI or Designated Research Staff must complete and submit the Animal Transport Form at least three (3) business days BEFORE animals are to be moved. Animal Care Technicians will review the request and if there are no issues/concerns, confirm transport time with PI or Research Staff, pack and transfer rodents to the new animal room/animal facility, where they are unpacked and placed in their new home cage.

In order to transfer animals into URI-facilities, the PI or Designated Research Staff must complete and submit an Animal Requisition Form. All animals transferred into URI-facilities must be on an approved IACUC protocol and approved by the AV. Health reports must be reviewed and approved by the AV prior to releasing animals from their sender and follow-up

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**IACUC POLICY
LABORATORY ANIMAL TRANSPORT**

**University of Rhode Island
Office of Research Integrity**

testing upon arrival may be required while in quarantine. The cost of this testing is usually borne by the PI. Animals are assigned to an appropriate room based on their health status, intended use and particular husbandry requirements. Transportation of incoming laboratory animals should be by commercial carriers familiar with applicable animal welfare regulations and guidelines. Additionally, applicable agreements should be in place (e.g., Material Transfer Agreements) for incoming animals when necessary.

Transfer of animals to non-URI facilities is subject to additional requirements, the extent of which depends on the location, as well as policies of, the receiving institution. All inter-institutional transport must be approved in the IACUC protocol and signed off by the AV. The complexity of shipping requirements changes significantly depending on:

- The location of receiving institution. As an example, shipping outside of the USA requires USDA/APHIS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service) certificate of veterinary inspection. Some States have specific quarantine requirements for some species.
- Transportation method, (for example, the airline's established company policy for the proper handling of the animals they transport).
- URI Animal Care Technicians may be able transport animals within the area. Transportation over longer distances will require the use of commercial carriers.
- It is strongly recommended that the Office of Research Integrity (874-4328) be contacted as soon as possible to make the necessary arrangements.

Note: To transfer animals between IACUC protocols, an Animal Transfer Form must be submitted.

REFERENCES

Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 8th Edition (2011)

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/Guide-for-the-Care-and-Use-of-Laboratory-Animals.pdf>

Guidelines for the Humane Transportation of Research Animals, National Academies Press (2006) <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK19637/>

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