

<b>TITLE:</b> Transport, Transfer and Receipt of Animals	<b>APPROVED:</b> March 14, 2012
<b>IACUC POLICY:</b> 001 <b>REVISION:</b> 03	<b>REVISED:</b> March 13, 2021
<b>SCOPE:</b> This policy applies to the transport of live animals to or from the GT Campus and to and from the GT animal facilities.	
<b>KEYWORDS:</b> transport, transfer, shipment, health certificate, supplier, source, receipt	
<b>Policy Owner:</b> Office of Research Integrity Assurance (ORIA) Vice President for Research Development and Operations (VPR-DO)	
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### **1. BACKGROUND:**

Transportation of research animals is often necessary to accomplish research goals for example animals must sometimes go to PI laboratories; to core or imaging equipment, or to other institutions or facilities at the same institution to facilitate collaboration. Concerns 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 zoonotic or hazardous agents and allergens.

### **2. POLICY:**

Indiscriminate animal transportation may jeopardize animal and human health and threaten animal research both at GT and at receiving institutions. Therefore:

- Transfers should be limited to what is unavoidable meaning that animals should stay at one institution and in one facility whenever possible.
- Transport and transfers within and to and from GT must be justified and have prior approval approved, including transfer from one GT PRL to another (e.g. from IBB PRL to TEP PRL or EBB PRL).
- Rats and mice must be obtained from GT-approved vendors or quarantine at Charles River, be re-derived or be received unborn.
- Rats and mice that are taken off campus cannot return to general housing in GT animal facilities (note, this does not include animals taken to GT 14<sup>th</sup> Street or other GT labs).
- If live research animals will be brought to the GT campus from another institution, the veterinarian must review and approve the health status of the home institution before animals arrive. In general, any positive on standard rodent panels anywhere at the home institution will preclude transfer.

### **Transfers on the GT Campus**

Transportation is among the most stressful events in laboratory animals' lives. For the benefit of animal welfare and research outcomes transportation must be minimized both in number of times and total time. Preparing the laboratory in advance of bringing animals and returning animals as soon as possible is imperative. Animals should not be brought to the laboratory first thing in the morning and kept there all day merely for convenience.

If going outdoors, weather at the time must be considered and steps taken to avoid rain, snow, cold and heat. The route taken should be indoors and avoid the public to the extent possible. For example, animals should not be carried outdoors between the M Building and IBB PRL and the tunnel between IBB PRL and ES&T must be used whenever possible.

### **Rodents from Ventilated Racks:**

Rodent cages used at GT are designed to be on ventilated racks where filtered air is pumped into and exhausted from each individual cage. The cages also contain a partial filter top, but ventilation is limited when using the filter top alone compared to forced ventilation on the rack. Therefore, as a general rule rodent cages can be off ventilated racks for maximally 4 hours. When traveling through public areas cages or transfer

containers must be made of or completely covered by opaque material. As soon as cages are out of public areas, however, opaque covers and other obstructions must be removed so that the filter top is open to the air and remains this way at all times except when traveling through public areas. Moreover, cages must not be stacked because blocking of filters and subsequent suffocation can occur. Short of suffocation, carbon dioxide, ammonia, heat and humidity will increase inside the cage when it is off the rack or when the filter is obstructed with subsequent negative effects on animal welfare and research outcomes. Even with the limited circulation through filter tops, conscious rodents should not be held in the same room where rodents are being operated, anesthetized or euthanized. Rodents produce ultrasonic distress communications and odors that can lead to further distress (beyond that of transportation and limited circulation).

### **Crossing State Lines with Animals**

When animals (other than mice and rats bred for use in research) are to be transferred across state lines, the veterinarian must examine them and provide health documents within 10 days of travel. For this reason these transfers must be planned in advance with the veterinarian.

### **Transfer of Animals from any PRL in Automobiles**

Direct accompaniment by a person who is familiar with the animals is preferred over commercial carriers. Animals must be placed in automobile passenger compartments preferably on the floor of front seat area as the bottom of the back seat may have higher concentrations of carbon monoxide in older vehicles. Heating and air conditioning must be provided as needed. In some cases it may be appropriate to carry euthanasia or tranquilizing drugs. This should be described in the IACUC-approved documents and planned in advance with the veterinarian. For trips within the city of Atlanta, no stops (stopping for lunch or running errands or other destinations) should be made and the animals must never be left alone in an automobile. The animal transport container(s) must be labeled with emergency contact information (Veterinarian, PI, others as appropriate) during transport in the event of an accident or emergency.

The IACUC had determined it is not necessary for the Committee to inspect private automobiles used to transport animals locally as part of the semiannual inspection.

### **3. RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- A. GT IACUC - review protocols and modifications to protocols to ensure consistency with the provisions of this policy.
- B. GT ORIA - provides resources and guidance to the IACUC, animal research investigators, and care staff on current regulatory requirements involving the transportation of animals.
- C. PIs and research team members - ensure that animals are transported in a way that meets the provisions described in this policy.

### **4. REFERENCES:**

- A. The Animal Welfare Act of 1966 (9CFR)  
[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_welfare/downloads/awa/awa.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/downloads/awa/awa.pdf)
- B. The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (Chapter 4, Pg 114; Appendix A, Pg 198) (ILAR, NCR, 8<sup>th</sup> Ed.) <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/Guide-for-the-care-and-use-of-Laboratory-animals.pdf>
- C. Guidelines for the Humane Transportation of Research Animals; National Research Council (2006).  
<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/11557.html>

D. NIH (ARAC) Guidelines for NIH Rodent Transportation (2007). <http://oacu.od.nih.gov/ARAC/>

**REVISION HISTORY:**

<b>Revision Number</b>	<b>Summary of Revisions</b>	<b>Revision Date</b>
01	IACUC determination on inspection of private automobiles.	December 2012
02	Update locations and formatting	March 10, 2015