

## ANIMAL TRANSPORTATION POLICY

EFFECTIVE ISSUE DATE: 05-19-2008

REVISION DATE: 3-20-2013

Approval(s):



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Chair, Univ. of Pittsburgh IACUC

3/20/2013

Date



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Attending Veterinarian, Sr. Exec. Director DLAR

3/20/2013

Date

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### Introduction

This policy establishes a standard for animal transportation within the University of Pittsburgh's animal-based research program. Importation of animals into the program, and export to other programs, is covered on the DLAR website services tab entitled; "Animal Movement: Transfer/Transport/Import/Export" (Ref #1). This policy clarifies animal transport within and between campus buildings; transport to locations outside the University; and transportation through animal use and public spaces. Transport of live or dead animals containing radioactive isotopes or exposed to biological or chemical hazards is also described. More specific and detailed information on methods and routes can be found in the companion document entitled; "[IACUC Animal Transport Guidelines](#)"

### 1) General Background

1. The University of Pittsburgh maintains a decentralized animal based research program comprised of several discrete vivaria (Animal Facility). It is often necessary to transport laboratory animals from their housing locations to a laboratory or shared equipment such as an imaging resource. However, removal of animals from the secure environment of the vivarium potentially exposes the animal, the rest of the animal colony, the public, the researchers, and the institution to various risks. It is incumbent upon Research teams, the Division of Laboratory Animal Resources (DLAR), Arts & Sciences (A&S) animal resources, Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) and ultimately the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and to manage these risks across the institution.
2. Removal of any animal from a DLAR or A&S managed vivaria must be justified in an approved IACUC protocol. All details of the transport from the vivarium to the destination and return if warranted must be explicitly described in the IACUC protocol.

3. Risks to the research program increase with exposure to the general public, therefore the transport procedures must be tailored to minimize contact with the public, and increased precautions are required as potential for contact with the public increases.

## 2) Basic Principles of Animal Transport

1. Animal Safety and Welfare Considerations - Transport container(s) must meet the minimum standards for size, strength, sanitation, and design for safe handling to accommodate the species, age, size and medical condition of the animal(s) to be transported. These devices are to be free of sharp projections, pinch points, and other hazards. The ideal transport cage/container is familiar to the animal(s), comfortable, quiet and designed to minimize stress. Special consideration should be given to medical conditions of the animals being transported, for example, pregnant, nursing, diabetic, aged, or immunocompromised. It is often necessary to transport anesthetized animals; therefore, the ability to monitor these animals during transport is recommended. Food/water may be necessary or may be contraindicated, depending on the purpose and duration of the trip. The temperature and ventilation of the cage environment should be controlled and be suitable and avoid extreme swings differing from the primary housing location for the species being transported. All aspects of the transport should be coordinated to minimize transport time. Additionally, the container must be labeled with the protocol number, PI name, emergency contact information, and any appropriate hazard notification.
2. Escape prevention- Transport containers must prevent escape or release of the animal if the caging is dropped or damaged. A secondary container surrounding the primary cage can serve this purpose and can improve climate control as well as biocontainment.
3. Containment of Biological, Radiological or Chemical hazards- Primary cages and secondary containers must be designed to contain hazardous materials. Research animals may harbor infectious agents, or have been exposed to potentially dangerous biological, chemical, or radioactive agents. In addition, hair, dander, urine and feces from any animal may cause allergic reactions in susceptible humans.
4. Bioexclusion and Animal Biosecurity- to maintain the health status of the existing animal population within the facility, return of animals after transport is strictly controlled to prevent potential introduction of excluded pathogens. Return of animals to an animal facility MUST be coordinated in advance with the animal facility management. Please reference the Rodent Biosecurity Policy (Reference 3)
5. Concealment- Transport containers MUST be inconspicuous and/or covered so that they can't be recognized as animal caging by the general public. Noise and odor must also be controlled when exposure to the public is possible.
6. Vehicles and carts- The DLAR maintains vehicles for animal transport. These vehicles are the preferred method for transporting animals between buildings. Use of personal vehicles is discouraged and requires approval by the IACUC. Species-specific transport carts of various types are often used when moving animals within buildings. Hand carrying small transport containers is appropriate when the route is short or involves stairs.
7. Other Animal Programs – It is common for University personnel to have collaborations with other institutions; however, these institutions have separate animal programs and IACUCs. Therefore, animals MUST NOT move between programs without the appropriate agreements between the

institutions and extensive discussions between the Attending Veterinarians and IACUCs of both institutions.

8. Contingency plans and emergency contact information- Contingency plans should be in place so that in the event of vehicular breakdown, accident, traffic, inclement weather, obstruction of a route, equipment failure, animal emergency, personnel emergency, biological, chemical, or radiological spill, etc. the transport can be either continued or aborted such that the animals, personnel, and public are not endangered. Contact information for all members of the transport team, as well as key university support personnel including EH&S and the DLAR on-call veterinarian, must accompany the animal so that communication can be maintained to manage unforeseen contingencies. (Ref 4 animal program emergency evacuation and contact information.)

**3) Further Information** - For details of recommended caging and secondary enclosures for each species, and approved routes, as well as contact information for DLAR truck scheduling, contact information for security access through routes, and contact information for persons responsible for permission to traverse specific routes, please see the companion document entitled; "IACUC Animal Transport Guidelines" (Ref 2 guidelines)

**4) Assistance** - For assistance in planning your specific transport, writing up the IACUC protocol correctly, and seeking the necessary approvals and permissions please contact the IACUC office. (412)383-2008. [IACUC@pitt.edu](mailto:IACUC@pitt.edu), [www.iacuc.pitt.edu](http://www.iacuc.pitt.edu)

**5) Reference info and Links**

1. **DLAR Animal Movement: Transfer/Transport** - <https://web.dlar.pitt.edu/services/transportation.aspx>
2. **IACUC Animal Transport Guidelines"**  
<http://www.iacuc2.pitt.edu/sop/restricted/TransportGuidelines.pdf>
3. **Rodent Biosecurity at the University of Pittsburgh**  
<http://www.iacuc2.pitt.edu/sop/restricted/RodentBiosecurity.pdf>
4. **IACUC animal program emergency evacuation and emergency Veterinary contact information**  
<http://www.iacuc.pitt.edu/protocol/compliance> - mandatory signage information page