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| TITLE: Transportation of Animals | | APPROVED: March 14, 2012 |
| IACUC POLICY: 001 | REVISION: 6 | REVISED: March 2026 |

DEFINITIONS

Transport and **transportation** refer to physically moving animals out of a housing room.
Transfer means moving animals between Georgia Tech IACUC protocols and is covered in other policies.
Non-motorized, wheeled conveyance means, for example, a cart or wagon.

POLICY

1. Animal Transportation Must Be Minimized

Animal transportation, local or long distance, may jeopardize animal and human health, may affect research results and is among the most distressing events in laboratory animals’ lives. Maintenance of animal colony microbial control requires minimizing exposure, which may increase during transportation. Additional transportation concerns include compliance with federal, state and local regulations; public perception of animal research; and containment of hazards.

2. Transportation Must Be Gentle And Must Minimize Environmental And Public Exposure

Rodent cages must be covered with opaque, breathable materials during transport outside animal facilities. Jostling must be minimized by going over bumps and thresholds slowly or in a stepwise fashion. DAR’s wagons may be better than DAR’s carts because they have a suspension system and high sides. If traveling outdoors, current weather must be considered, and rain and temperature extremes avoided. The route should be indoors and avoid the public to the extent possible, but avoiding the public has priority. For example, the IBB and EBB atriums should be avoided even though traveling outdoors is the alternative. The Molecular Science & Engineering building elevator should be used when transporting between IBB and EBB. Use freight elevators and tunnels when available.

3. Pre-Approval Is Not Required For Transport Within The Housing Facility

Neither IACUC nor DAR approval is required when moving animals within their housing facility. See Procedure below “Documentation When Taking Animals Out of Their Housing Room.”

4. Pre-Approval Is Not Required For Transport Between IBB And EBB Animal Facilities

Keeping in mind the need to minimize transport, researchers may move animals between the EBB and IBB housing facilities once they notify and receive training from DAR managers. Researchers may also request transport from DAR for a fee by filling out a “Transport Request” form at least 3 days in advance of the desired transport. Animals may be transported between IBB and EBB by hand-carrying (maximally two cages), using a Georgia Tech automobile or using a non-motorized, wheeled conveyance.

5. Pre-Approval Is Required For Transportation Of Animals To And From Georgia Tech Research Labs

IACUC approval of justification for taking animals to laboratories for each procedure on a protocol is required due to the aforementioned transportation-associated challenges and because laboratories may not be equivalent to animal facilities in cage ventilation, lighting, noise, humidity, temperature, monitoring, social housing, biosecurity, sanitizable surfaces, etc. In addition, both the IACUC and AAALAC may inspect all places where animals are taken. The list of locations for these inspections is generated from IACUC

protocols. DAR does not routinely provide laboratory delivery services. See procedures for transportation below.

6. Pre-Approval Is Required For Transport To Non-Georgia Tech Owned/Leased Spaces

Rodents taken to non-Georgia Tech owned or leased animal laboratories/facilities must not return to Georgia Tech animal facilities.

7. Rodents From Non-Georgia Tech-Approved Sources Must Undergo Professional Quarantine Prior To Transportation To Georgia Tech Animal Facilities

ORIA maintains a list of Approved Animal Vendors. See procedure below “Rodents from Non-Approved Vendors”

8. Transportation Vehicle Choice

Use of golf carts and similar vehicles is strongly discouraged and is not acceptable as a long-term choice due to lack of climate control, poor suspension and difficulty in controlling speed and braking which may increase jostling and animal distress. In addition, payloads in these vehicles may be visible and difficult to secure. Golf carts that overcome some of these limitations do not offer cost benefits over a regular automobile or truck which can carry larger payloads.

9. Pre-Approval Is Required For Transport Of Animals In Privately Owned Automobiles

The Guide for the Care & Use of Laboratory Animals, 8th edition states “Transportation in private vehicles is discouraged because of potential animal biosecurity, safety, health, and liability risks for the animals, personnel, and institution.” Use of DAR vehicles, other vehicles owned by Georgia Tech or use of professional animal transportation companies (for longer than on-campus trips) is, therefore, preferred. Use of private vehicles must be IACUC approved and may include circumstances where animal welfare is better or exposure of animals or people is reduced in private automobiles, or when DAR- or Georgia Tech-owned vehicles are not available, or their use is less practical or is less familiar to the driver. No one will be compelled to use their private automobile against their wishes, however. See Procedure for transportation in private automobiles below. Private automobiles are not included in Georgia Tech semi-annual IACUC inspections.

From the Statewide Travel Policy section 2.3 “While driving a personal vehicle on state business, the State provides full liability coverage and personal immunity for the Traveler for damages and injuries the Traveler may cause to others. However, the State does not provide coverage for damages to your personal vehicle. Cost of repairs to a personal vehicle, whether or not they result from the Traveler’s acts, are not reimbursable. Under no circumstances will the State reimburse tickets, parking fines or violations related to federal and state statutes.”

PROCEDURES

A. Special Care of cages when off ventilated racks

Rodent cages used at Georgia Tech are designed to be on ventilated racks where HEPA-filtered air is pumped into and exhausted from each individual cage. These cages have a partial filter top, but ventilation is limited when relying on the filter top alone compared to forced ventilation on the rack. Therefore, if cages will be off the rack for more than 4 hours, then the filters should be removed from cage lids to allow for adequate ventilation. However, this option is not appropriate for ABSL-2 animals. Please refer to DAR orientation documents and the DAR SOP for ABSL-2 animal transport for additional information.

As soon as cages are out of public areas opaque covers and other obstructions must be removed so that the filter is open to the air. Cages must not be stacked except during brief periods of transport to avoid

obstruction of filters and subsequent suffocation. In addition to suffocation risk, carbon dioxide, ammonia, heat and humidity 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 air circulation).

B. Documentation required when taking animals out of their housing room

An “Animal Sign Out Sheet” is found in each housing room on a clipboard that must be filled out at the time of transport so that the DAR can manage rack space. This space is fluid due to ongoing euthanasia, weaning and shipments. The sheet must be completed even for brief removal for a procedure; otherwise, the space might be taken prior to return.

After making reservations on SUMS (Shared User Management System) researchers may move animals to Procedure or Operating Rooms in the facilities where their animals are housed at their discretion without notification. “Prepare the animal last” to minimize animal distress is a dictum in the DAR meaning that the room and materials should be set up including drawing drugs into syringes, warming up machines, gathering tools, etc. before an animal is brought into the room. After animals are recovered from anesthesia, cages must be returned to the housing room and rack where they came from and placed adjacent to others on the same protocol, but the exact position of each cage on the rack is not important and may be done at researcher’s discretion where there are open spaces. Up to two cages at a time may be hand-carried, or a non-motorized, wheeled conveyance may be used when transporting animals within their housing facility.

C. Procedures for minimizing time out of the animal facility

Preparing the laboratory in advance of bringing animals and returning animals as soon as possible is imperative. Animals should not be held in laboratories for extended periods for convenience or to combine unrelated trips.

D. Entry after lights out

Entrance into housing rooms after lights out (7PM for most rooms) must be avoided to prevent disruption of circadian rhythm which may cause distress and affect research results. Exceptions must meet the following qualifications:

- There must be a research requirement (such as an unavoidable timepoint after lights out)
- Animal facility managers must be notified, and they must provide training on how to enter with minimal disruption (red flashlight, etc.)
- Never for a mouse breeding room due to decreased fecundity

E. Rodents from Non-Approved Vendors

Health status information from the source must be provided to a Georgia Tech laboratory animal veterinarian who will use it to determine what type of outside, professional quarantine and testing or re-derivation is required. Even if re-derivation was not originally indicated, it may be required based on quarantine test results. The shipping manager at the source will arrange transport to the quarantine facility, and a Georgia Tech DAR manager will arrange shipping from the quarantine facility. Researchers must not make animal shipping arrangements.

F. Procedures for Use of Private Automobiles

Animals must be placed in automobile passenger compartments preferably on the floor of the front seat as 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 protocol and planned in advance with a veterinarian. For trips within the city of Atlanta, no stops (e.g., stopping for lunch or running errands) should be made and the animals must not be left alone in an automobile. Emergency contact information should be available in the automobile. If a waiver or other documents are required by Georgia Tech in the future, they must be signed by the driver in advance.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Georgia Tech IACUC - review protocols and modifications to protocols to ensure consistency with the provisions of this policy.
- ORIA - provides resources and guidance to the IACUC, animal research investigators, and care staff on current regulatory requirements involving the transportation of animals.
- DAR – provide training on animal transportation and access to relevant SOPs.
- PI/PD and research team members - ensure that animals are transported in a way that meets the provisions described in this policy.

REFERENCES

The Animal Welfare Act and Regulations (7 U.S.C. 2131 and 9 C.F.R. Parts 1-4)
https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/AC_BlueBook_AWA_508_comp_version.pdf
 The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (Chapter 4, Pg 114; Appendix A, Pg 198) (ILAR, NCR, 8th Ed.) <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 Research Council (2006).
<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/11557.html>
 NIH Animal Research Advisory Committee (ARAC) Guidelines for NIH Rodent Transportation (2007).
https://oacu.oir.nih.gov/system/files/media/file/2023-04/b1-1_RodentTransportation.pdf
 NIH Animal Research Advisory Committee (ARAC) Guidelines for NIH Non-Rodent Transportation.
https://oacu.oir.nih.gov/system/files/media/file/2023-03/B1b_NonrodentTransport.pdf

| SCOPE: This policy applies to the transport of live animals to or from the Georgia Tech Campus and to and from the Georgia Tech animal facilities. | | |
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| KEYWORDS: transport, transfer, shipment, health certificate, supplier, source, receipt | | |
| Policy Owner: Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee (IACUC) | | |
| Policy Contacts: IACUC@gatech.edu ; vet@gatech.edu | | |
| REVISION HISTORY: | | |
| Revision | Summary of Revisions | Revision Date |
| 01 | IACUC determination on inspection of private automobiles. | December 2012 |
| 02 | Update locations and formatting | March 10, 2015 |
| 03 | Removal of old animal facility name (“PRL”) Clarify IACUC approval requirement | November 7, 2023 |
| 04 | Update links and contact information, Add definitions | January 2024 |
| 05 | Update Institute formatting | October 2025 |
| 06 | Major revision including separation of policy and procedures | March 2026 |