IACUC Standard Operating Procedure
Transporting Laboratory Rodents

Objective: To identify steps to transport rodents in between research areas within a building and between buildings on campus

Author: Chandra D. Williams, DVM, DACLAM

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Purpose
This procedure describes steps that must be followed when transporting laboratory rodents on the Campus of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte between an animal colony and a research laboratory. The procedures are necessary to protect the health and welfare of the animals, staff and students.

Procedures
1. Mice and rats may be transported between animal housing (the Vivarium) and research laboratories on campus.
2. Personnel transporting the rodents must be named on the protocol to which the animals are allocated. The only exception to this is Vivarium staff and the Attending Veterinarian.
3. All plans for animal transportation outside the building must be discussed with, and approved by, the Attending Veterinarian and/or the Director of Laboratory Animal Resources, in advance
4. Numbers of rodents to be transported will depend on the vehicle used.
   i. New or sterilized commercial shipping boxes or cardboard food pails (i.e., clean, unused portable food containers inside cardboard boxes so everything may be discarded upon completion) may be used as transport containers for mice with the following restrictions:
      1. Maximum of four mice or one female and litter per compartment from the same cage. Mice from different cages must be put in separate containers to prevent fighting.
      2. Rodents may remain in the containers for a maximum of 60 minutes, including transport time and time at the final destination.
      3. Containers with live rodents must be handled carefully. They must not be tossed, dropped, needlessly tilted, or stacked in a manner which could result in their falling, or handled in a manner which may cause physical trauma or distress to the animals.
4. If animals will be housed in the laboratory for more than 1 hour, a disposable container will be used to transport animals and animals will be transferred into a clean cage once in the laboratory. Food and water must be provided. Cages must be returned to the Vivarium in a timely fashion.
6. Temperature extremes must be avoided during transport. When temperatures fall outside of this range (45°F - 85°F), rodents can only be moved during regular working hours when a UNC Charlotte approved vehicle is available.

7. Rodents being transported must be done in a timely fashion to limit the time to ten minutes outside of a temperature-controlled building.

8. Rodents to be moved within a building:
   i. Will be placed in a container (as described above).
   ii. Will be moved on a cart. They will not be hand-carried.
   iii. Attempts will be made to move animals between floors only in otherwise empty elevators. I.e., the individual moving the rodents will only enter an empty elevator.

9. Biosafety Level considerations:
   i. Rodents with a BSL1 biohazard classification may be returned to Room 179 (Exterior Quarantine) of the Vivarium only after having been in a research laboratory.
   ii. Rodents with a BSL2 biohazard classification may be returned to the original Vivarium holding room.

10. Off-Campus Transportation of Rodents
    i. Long-distance transportation is preferentially accomplished by a licensed hauler in an environmentally-controlled vehicle.
    ii. Should such transport be proposed by research staff in personal vehicles:
        1. The staff must be named on the protocol to which the animals are allocated.
        2. The personnel are responsible for the animals and the containers, and must keep the containers in their possession at all times to prevent undue trauma to the animals.
        3. The animals must be transported over the most expeditious route.
        4. All transportation plans must be discussed with, and approved by, the Attending Veterinarian and/or the Director of Laboratory Animal Resources (DLAR), in advance.
           a. Considerations will include:
              1) The vehicle proposed for transport
              2) Contingencies in the event of an emergency
              3) Potential return of the shipping containers
    5. Any vehicle proposed for moving rodents must:
       a. Be capable of temperature maintenance
       b. Have an area for holding of animal containers which can be disinfected
       c. Be approved in advance by the AV or DLAR

11. Disinfection
    i. If any body fluids (blood, urine, saliva, mucus), feces, or dirty bedding contacts any surface outside the transport container, that surface must be immediately disinfected.
    ii. Approved products for such topical disinfection include:
        1. Quaternary ammonia
        2. Virkon S
        3. Chlorine dioxide

12. Disposal/Return of Shipping Containers
    i. Disposable cardboard shipping containers may be discarded after the rodents have been removed.
1. They should be placed in opaque trash bags, and the bags sealed
2. The sealed bags should be discarded intact

ii. Reusable plastic shippers may be returned to the Vivarium
1. After removal of the transported rodents:
   a. Remove any soiled bedding, food, and water source
   b. Thoroughly disinfect the container
   c. Place in a large plastic bag, spray with disinfectant and seal