Animal Transportation Policy

This policy applies to animals (except wild caught and animals being transported offsite for veterinary care) that are being transported outside of the Laboratory Animal Medical Services (LAMS) facilities. Measures must be taken to protect the animals in transport, personnel working with the animals, and other individuals who may be exposed to the animals or cages. For animals used in biological, chemical or radiological studies, additional safety requirements may apply (consult with applicable safety office).

1) Non-rodent USDA species must be transported by LAMS.

2) For rodents and non-mammals, the following steps are to be followed when removing animals from LAMS facilities and transporting them within the same or interconnected building(s):
   a) Cages used for transport should limit exposure to allergens, waste products, or odors, while providing sufficient air for normal respiration.
   b) Animals are to be transported in closed containers such as microisolator and solid top cages or filtered shipping containers.
      i) Solid top lids may be used if transportation and holding of animals will be 30 minutes or less.
      ii) If greater than 30 minutes, a filter top cage or breathable shipping crate must be used.
         (1) Stacking of cages/crates is not permitted as it can obstruct air flow through the filter top/cage lid.
   c) Aquatic and semi-aquatic animals are transported in environmentally-appropriate crates or water tight containers.
   d) Proper identification must accompany the cage(s) or crate(s).
   e) Do not include any non-essential moveable objects (e.g. enrichment devices) in the cages, as their movement during transport could injure an animal.
   f) All cages and other containment devices must be covered with a breathable opaque material to contain allergens and to prevent public viewing during transport.
   g) Service elevators must be used where available.
   h) Up to 2 standard rodent cages or plastic vendor boxes may be carried by hand. If 3 or more cages are to be transported, a cart is required.
   i) Upon arrival to the destination, animals should have access to food and water unless restriction has been stipulated and approved in the IACUC protocol.

3) The following additional steps are required when transporting animals outside of a building:
   a) Cage lids must be secured to the cages with a clip, tie, or residue-free tape to prevent escape of the animal. Shipping crates must also be secured. LAMS will provide residue-free tape. Tape that leaves a residue may not be used.
b) If transporting 3 or more cages, the cages must be secured to a cart in a manner such that if the cart were to tip over, the cages would not open. Suggestions include a bungee-type cord or a cart with an inner area to securely transport the cage.

c) During times of extreme temperatures animal transport may be detrimental to animal well-being and, therefore, may not be possible unless an appropriately heated or cooled means of transportation is available (Guide). Precautions should be taken to help ensure that appropriate, species-specific ambient temperatures within the cage are maintained (e.g., additional nesting material provided, transporting the cage within a thermally insulated container).

4) **General criteria for a transport vehicle include:**

   (1) Whenever possible, a dedicated animal transport vehicle should be used (e.g. LAMS vehicles). If a personal vehicle must be used, IACUC approval prior to use must be obtained.

   (2) The heating/cooling system of the vehicle must maintain the inside temperature of the vehicle at an appropriate temperature (based on species) prior to loading the animals (e.g. 65-75°F for laboratory rodents).

   (3) The animal containers should be positioned in the vehicle so that airflow is not blocked and the containers will not tip or slide.

   (4) A method to secure the cage(s) inside of the vehicle should be employed (e.g. bungee cords)

   (5) Attention should be paid to protect animals from direct sunlight to avoid cages overheating.

   (6) Animals should not be left in the vehicle any longer than what is necessary to transport them to their destination. There should be no stops during transport. Stops for gasoline should only occur if the trip goes beyond the tank capabilities of the vehicle, and such long trips require specific pre-approval from the IACUC.

   (7) In the event a vehicle malfunctions in transit:

       (a) Immediate action should be taken to ensure the animal’s environment remains suitable.

       (b) Prioritize completion of the animal transport over vehicle repair.

       (c) Ensure a rescue vehicle (LAMS or another investigator) is available the day and time the animal transport will be occurring.

**NOTE:** Empty cages must be covered with an opaque material when outside of LAMS facilities and returned to LAMS facilities within 24 hours to reduce personnel exposure to allergens.

**REFERENCES:**