

IACUC Guidelines for Animal Transportation/Shipping of Rodents at UWM

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Revision history:

The Department of Transportation (DOT), US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and UWM Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) have established strict guidelines for transport of all live animals. As a shipper/transporter you are responsible for talking all the necessary precautions to ensure the well-being of animals.

Prerequisite

There are certain requirements that apply to all transportation of live animals regardless of the final destination. The following is a summary of the more important requirements:

You must:

- Be an authorized user under a currently active protocol.
- Be knowledgeable in the transportation guidelines.

Cages and other shipping containers must meet the minimum standard for size, ventilation, strength, sanitation and design for safe handling. Some transportation related stress is inevitable, but it can be minimized by attention to those factors (contact the ARC staff for assistance).

General Transportation Requirements

The IACUC Chair (or designee) is

- Responsible for oversight of these animal transportation guidelines, and
- Can grant exceptions when it is considered in the best interest of the animal(s).
- The IACUC will resolve conflicts regarding animal transportation issues.

Plan all transportation of animals, including intra-institutional transportation, to:

- Minimize transit time and the risk of zoonoses.
- Protect against environmental extremes.
- Avoid overcrowding.
- Provide food and water when indicated.
- Protect against physical trauma.
- Different species cannot be transported at the same time in the same vehicle.
- Avoid temperature extremes when animals are transported; special precautions or postponements are required when temperatures are below 45° F or above 85° F and may jeopardize the welfare of the animals.
- Exercise care in handling enclosures used to transport live animals. They must not be tossed, dropped, needlessly tilted, stacked in a manner which may reasonably be expected to result in their falling, or handled in any manner which may cause physical trauma or stress to the animals.
- Contact the ARC staff to verify that the animals removed from the housing areas can be returned. This is especially important for rodents, as rodents taken out of a barrier facility to a laboratory, or non-barrier space, cannot return to the barrier.
- If animal(s) will not be returned notify the ARC staff and mark the census sheet on the day the animals are removed. Per diem charges are calculated based on the animal housing period.
- Rats and mice may be transported using your own vehicles; however you must fill out the Transportation Check-Off Sheet for Rodents and return it to the ARC office in Lapham Hall B51 before transit.
- Please contact ARC staff at 229-6016/2905 for assistance on transportation of animals. Animals cannot be transported on UWM shuttles or buses, public transportation or private cabs.

Specific Transportation Requirements

Within UWM campus

- Animals can only be transported to facilities (e.g. laboratories, study areas) outside of the ARC space for which the Investigator has an approval from the IACUC. Please note: housing of rats or mice in your lab overnight requires IACUC approval.
- Transportation of animals must be done in a direct and timely manner, avoiding public areas when possible.
- The hallways are public and as such any movement of animals to a lab in these areas should be discrete and unobtrusive. Opaque or shielded transportation containers reduce animal stress and should be used when moving animals in a public area.
- Rodents may be hand carried or transported in private vehicles between buildings on the UWM campus in filter-top housing cages. The cages should be placed in another container such as a laundry bag, box or in the transfer cart with a cover so there is secondary containment.
- Do not place cages in the hallways outside of the laboratories. This practice may result in spread of disease to the healthy rodent populations and staff; lost cages also contribute towards higher costs. Return all empty cages to the ARC facility.

Between UWM and Institutions in the Milwaukee Metropolitan Area

At times it is necessary to transport animals between UWM and external facilities. In these instances, the following requirements apply:

- The transportation must be pre-approved by the IACUC and described in the approved protocol addressing the mode of transportation, the number of animals transported, and the frequency of transportation.
- Animal may not be transporting animals in personal vehicles is strongly discouraged and must be approved by the veterinarian without prior IACUC approval
- Animals may NOT be transported on any UWM shuttles/buses or any form of public transportation.
- There must be full coordination with the supervisor of the facility receiving the animal(s) at the other campus site. This is important to ensure that animals are received properly and that appropriate facilities are available for housing.
- Newly transported animals should be given a period of physiologic, psychological, and nutritional stabilization before their use. The length of time for stabilization will depend on the type and duration of animal transportation, the species involved, and the intended use of the animals.

Between UWM and Institutions located outside of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Area

Transfer of animals to locations outside of the Milwaukee Metropolitan area is subject to additional requirements, the extent of which depends on the location, as well as policies of, the receiving institution.

The complexity of shipping requirements changes significantly depending on:

- The location of receiving institution. As an example, shipping outside of the USA requires USDA/APHIS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service) certificate of veterinary inspection. Some states have specific quarantine requirements for some species.
- Transportation method, (for example, the airline's established company policy for the proper handling of the animals they transport).
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- ARC staff must be contacted as soon as possible to make the necessary arrangements.

Health Assurance Information:

- Facilities receiving animals typically require health assurance information before they will accept the animals.
- To facilitate the export of animals from UWM, the ARC requests that investigators contact the ARC staff directly.

Confirming the Shipment

- The investigator will contact the receiving institution and provide them with the necessary health assurance information; these may be obtained from the ARC.
- Once the receiving institution agrees to accept the animals, the investigator will confirm the shipping address.

Shipping the Animals

- The ARC will coordinate shipping arrangements.
- The investigator must complete the Animal Shipping Export form.
- The ARC has contact information for commercial shipping firms that handle animals, shipping crates and miscellaneous items such as transport gel.
- To ensure the safety and well-being of the animals, the ARC requires that animals not be shipped after Wednesday of a normal business week. Shipping later in the week may

result in animals being left unattended over a weekend in an airport cargo containment facility.

Transporting Live or Dead Animals Containing Hazardous Materials

Transportation of hazardous materials in general poses special problems. This is significantly amplified (e.g. potential spread through excreta) when the material is contained in an animal. It is therefore important that appropriate precautions are incorporated both during the transportation and after the animals have arrived at their destination. Due to complexity of these requirements, the investigators planning to transport live animals containing biohazards (e.g. human pathogens) or chemicals (e.g. carcinogens) from one location to another must contact University Safety & Assurances directly for specific guidance.