

UBC ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE

POLICY 002

TRANSPORT OF RESEARCH ANIMALS

Date Approved: November 21, 2007

Date Revised: February 2, 2011

PURPOSE: This document covers the guidelines on the movement and transport of research animals between UBC animal facilities (including UBC related hospital sites), an animal facility and a laboratory or between laboratory rooms within a facility (if the transport involves movement through public spaces). The transport of animals through public spaces should be minimized for the protection of animal and human health.

POLICY: All animals that are being transported must fall under a current and approved Animal Care Committee Protocol. All efforts to minimize stress to the animal must be taken. Awareness of public sensitivity concerning the use of research animals must be considered at all times during the transport of animals. The possible consequences of the transport of these animals to animals and staff in the receiving location must also be considered (see Procedures below).

RESPONSIBILITY: It is the responsibility of the investigators (sender and receiver) to ensure that animals are being transported in a way that follows this Policy. The UBC veterinarian is responsible for advising on the health status of any animal transported from one UBC facility to another and whether the transport will compromise the health of other animals in the receiving unit.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ANIMAL SHIPPING PERSONNEL:

Take all measures to maintain health status and minimize stress to the animals during transport. This includes:

- Minimize transit time
- Protect against environmental extremes
- Provide adequate ventilation during shipment
- Avoid overcrowding or inappropriate mixing of animals
- Protect animals from physical trauma and undue stress
- Minimize the duration of time that animals are left sitting in transport cages before and after shipment.
- Ensure animal transfer is done in a secure fashion
- Provide adequate food and water source

TRANSPORT CONTAINERS:

- Animals must be shielded from public view either by using opaque containers or an opaque covering over the container.
- Transport containers should always be covered to aid containment of potential allergens, pathogens, waste products and odours, while providing adequate ventilation (stacking rodent cages or using enclosed impermeable containers or trash bags without air holes do not provide adequate ventilation).
- Food and a water supplement must be provided.

- Overcrowding must be avoided, i.e. the accepted housing density for the species must not be exceeded.
- Social groups should be maintained during transit.
- Animals prone to fighting, such as male mice normally housed separately, should always be shipped in separate compartments.
- Cages must be escape proof and protected from unintended openings – i.e. they should have a latch or locking mechanism, rubber band, bungee straps, etc. This applies particularly to transport through public or open spaces.
- All cages must be properly labeled.

VEHICLE GUIDELINES:

- Vehicles should have adequate heating/cooling to maintain general animal comfort – special precautions or postponement for longer trips should be considered for temperatures below 7C or higher than 29C for most animals.
- Protection from direct sun is required.
- Animals must not be left unattended in a vehicle for more than 15 minutes during transport and the vehicle must be locked if unattended.
- Animals must not be placed in the vehicle's trunk.
- Public transport (ex. bus, taxi, etc.) is NOT an acceptable means to move research animals.
- Animal containers should be secured to the vehicle's internal structure during transit.

PRACTICAL PROCEDURES:

- Movement of non-rodent species within UBC
 - a. All non-rodent species (this includes rabbits) must be transported by the staff of the Animal Care Centre, or other personnel approved by the University Veterinarian.
 - b. An animal transfer order must be received by the Centre before the transfer date.
- Movement of rodent species within UBC
 - a. Ensure animals need to be transported out of facility as most facilities do not allow animals to be brought back.
 - b. If animals are to be kept in a lab for more than 12 hours, refer to the Alternative Housing of Experimental Animals Policy.
 - c. Choose a route that is direct and of shortest duration avoiding traveling through major public areas.
 - d. No more than two containers may be hand-carried by an individual person at one time.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES FOR TRANSPORT BETWEEN UNITS:

1. Approval must be granted by the Manager of the importing facility prior to arranging the transfer of the animals. This is to ensure that space, including appropriate caging, is available prior to the animals arriving and that the health status meets the criteria set by the local

- animal user committee.
2. The local animal users committee will set the health criteria to be met by animals transferred into the facility. Because of differences in health status among different animal facilities, the Manager/Director of the importing facility should also consult with the veterinary staff for recommendations before deciding whether to approve the transfer. In cases not covered by the previously established criteria, the import request should be reviewed by the local animal user committee.
 3. An animal transfer notification (for rodents to be transferred by the investigator) or request (for transport by the Animal Care Centre) must be received by the Animal Care Centre before the transfer date (see forms on www.animalcare.ubc.ca) to be viewed by the clinical veterinarians, and the facility Managers from both facilities must be notified by the transporter. The transfer coordinator will contact facility manager and/or user committee if shipping is not recommended.
 4. Delivery staff of the Animal Care Centre will speak to animal care personnel in the recipient facility at the time of delivery to ensure that the arrival of the animals is known. A signature must be obtained from the receiver. A signed copy will be kept by both parties. Investigators transferring mice themselves will also follow this procedure.

Transporting Animals Containing Hazardous Materials

Investigators planning to transport live animals containing radioactive materials or biohazards (e.g. human pathogens) or chemicals (e.g. carcinogens) from one location to another must ensure specific guidelines set out by UBC Department of Occupational Health and Safety are followed.