

TITLE: Transport, Transfer and Receipt of Animals		APPROVED: March 14, 2012
IACUC POLICY: 001	REVISION: 05	REVISED: October 2025
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.		
KEYWORDS: transport, transfer, shipment, health certificate, supplier, source, receipt		
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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 discussed in other policies.

1. BACKGROUND:

Transportation of research animals is often necessary to accomplish research goals for example animals must sometimes go to PI laboratories; to core or imaging equipment, or to other institutions or facilities at the same institution to facilitate collaboration. Concerns include, but are not limited to, animal welfare; compliance with federal, state and local regulations; impact on the public perception of animal research; and containment of zoonotic or hazardous agents and allergens.

2. POLICY:

A. Animal Transportation Must Be Minimized

Indiscriminate animal transportation may jeopardize animal and human health and threaten animal research both at Georgia Tech and at receiving institutions.

Therefore:

- Transfers should be limited to what is unavoidable, meaning that animals should stay at one institution and in one facility whenever possible.
- Transport and transfers within and to and from Georgia Tech must be justified and have prior approval approved, including transfer from one Georgia Tech animal facility to another (e.g. to/from IBB, EBB, or Science Square DAR facilities).
- Rats and mice must be obtained from Georgia Tech-approved vendors or quarantine at Charles River, be re-derived or be received unborn.
- Rats and mice that are taken off campus cannot return to general housing in Georgia Tech animal facilities (note, this does not include animals taken to Georgia Tech 14th Street or other Georgia Tech labs).
- If live research animals will be brought to the Georgia Tech campus from another institution, the Attending Veterinarian must review and approve the health status of the home institution before animals arrive. In general, any positive on standard rodent panels anywhere at the home institution will preclude transfer.

B. IACUC Approval

IACUC approval is required for when transporting animals with the following exceptions:

- Transporting from one DAR facility to another DAR facility (DAR coordination required)
- Transporting within a DAR facility

C. Transport on the Georgia Tech Campus

Minimize duration: Transportation is among the most stressful events in laboratory animals' lives. For the benefit of animal welfare and research outcomes transportation must be minimized both in number of times and total time. Preparing the laboratory in advance of bringing animals and returning animals as soon as possible is imperative. Animals should not be brought to the laboratory first thing in the morning and kept there all day merely for convenience. Time for removal from and return to the DAR facility must also comply with the DAR housing requirements.

Minimize Exposure: If you must travel outdoors, weather at the time must be considered and steps taken to avoid rain, snow, cold and heat. The route taken should be indoors and avoid the public to the extent possible. For example, animals should not be carried outdoors between the M Building and IBB animal facility and the tunnel between IBB animal facility and ES&T must be used whenever possible.

Rodents from Ventilated Racks: Rodent cages used at Georgia Tech are designed to be on ventilated racks where filtered air is pumped into and exhausted from each individual cage. The cages also contain a partial filter top, but ventilation is limited when using the filter top alone compared to forced ventilation on the rack. Therefore, as a general rule, rodent cages can be off ventilated racks for maximally 4 hours. When traveling through public areas cages or transfer containers must be made of or completely covered by opaque material. As soon as cages are out of public areas, however, opaque covers and other obstructions must be removed so that the filter top is open to the air and remains this way at all times except when traveling through public areas. Moreover, cages must not be stacked because blocking of filters and subsequent suffocation can occur. Short of suffocation, carbon dioxide, ammonia, heat and humidity will 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 circulation).

D. Mode of Transport

Transport by Automobile:

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.

As such, automotive transport should be in vehicles owned by Georgia Tech (including DAR transport) or through a professional animal transportation company whenever possible. When placed in a passenger type car, animals should be placed on the floor of front passenger seat area as the floor of 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 (and described in the IACUC protocol after consultation with the attending veterinarian). For trips within the city of Atlanta, no stops (stopping for lunch or running errands or other destinations) should be made and the animals must never be left alone in an automobile. The animal transport container(s) must be labeled with emergency contact information (Veterinarian, PI, others as appropriate) during transport in the event of an accident or emergency.

The IACUC has determined it is not necessary for the Committee to inspect private automobiles used to transport animals locally as part of the semiannual inspection.

Transport by cart or hand-carry:

Animals may be transported between IBB and EBB or to nearby laboratories by hand-carrying (up to two cages) or by rolling cart. Populated public areas should be avoided when possible while still minimizing the route. Caution should be taken to reduce any bouncing or jostling of animals from uneven surfaces.

Crossing State Lines with Animals

When animals (other than mice and rats bred for use in research) are to be transferred across state lines, the veterinarian must examine them and provide health documents within 10 days of travel. For this reason, these transfers must be planned well in advance with the veterinarian.

Transfer of animals

Transferring animals from one approved protocol to another approved protocol within the same facility is covered in other policies and procedures.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES:

- A. Georgia Tech IACUC - review protocols and modifications to protocols to ensure consistency with the provisions of this policy.
- B. Georgia Tech ORIA - provides resources and guidance to the IACUC, animal research investigators, and care staff on current regulatory requirements involving the transportation of animals.
- C. PIs and research team members - ensure that animals are transported in a way that meets the provisions described in this policy.

4. REFERENCES:

- A. The Animal Welfare Act of 1966 (9CFR)
http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/downloads/awa/awa.pdf
- B. 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>
- C. Guidelines for the Humane Transportation of Research Animals; National Research Council (2006).
<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/11557.html>
- D. 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
- E. 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

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