

**University of Tennessee Health Science
Center Institutional Animal Care and Use
Committee**

Animal Transportation Policy

BACKGROUND

The *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* (the *Guide*) states that “The process of transportation should provide an appropriate level of animal biosecurity while minimizing zoonotic risks, protecting against environmental extremes, avoiding overcrowding, providing for the animals’ physical, physiologic, or behavioral needs and comfort, and protecting the animals and personnel from physical trauma”.

The Policy outlined below provides guidance to investigators on how to safely and effectively transport animals within or between buildings on the UTHSC campus as well as affiliated institutions (e.g., the VA Medical Center, LeBonheur). These procedures are necessary to ensure the health and well-being not only of the animals, but also of the people in areas through which animals are transported.

Please share this information with any of your staff involved with transporting animals on campus. Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the IACUC office at 448-3904, mbraslow@uthsc.edu or the Laboratory Animal Care Unit at 448-5656, lacu@uthsc.edu.

GENERAL POLICIES

1. The performance site(s) for all animal procedures and the methods for transporting animals to and from these performance sites must be described in the animal research protocol, and reviewed and approved by the IACUC.
2. When transporting animals between laboratories and the animal housing areas, the most direct route should be taken in order to minimize the time spent in areas where the public may be present.
 - The hallways in campus buildings are considered public areas. When transporting animals outside of any animal facility, cages must be completely shielded from public view.
 - Cages and carts must be draped with cloth or other opaque covering. Note that the yellow gowns provided as personal protective equipment (PPE) are not adequate for use as drapes or coverings, and should not leave the animal facility.
 - If tote bags are used, the cages must fit entirely within the bag.

3. All animals must be transported in a species-appropriate container. The container must be sanitizable or disposable and must have no floor openings that may injure the animal, and must allow proper air exchange within the cage. It must provide a secure environment that is escape proof, has a solid floor, and be free of sharp edges that could possibly injure the animal. When transporting animals in standard shoebox cages, solid cage lids must be replaced with filter top lids.
4. Up to 2 standard rodent cages may be carried by hand and 3 standard cages may be carried using the LACU provided tote bags. If more than 3 cages are to be transported, a cart is required. In all cases, cage lids must be secured to the cages with a clip, tie, or residue-free tape to prevent escape of the animal. Cages that contain animals must not be stacked.
5. If animals will remain in the laboratory for more than 2 hours, transfer the animals to clean cages with fresh bedding. When possible, plan in advance and ask the LACU staff for extra clean boxes.
6. After transport:
 - Keep the filter top lid on soiled cages after the animals have been removed.
 - Return soiled cages to the animal facility as soon as possible after animal procedures. Empty cages should not be placed in the hallways outside of laboratories.
 - Do not allow empty soiled cages to remain in the laboratory overnight.
7. Note that empty cages should also be covered when they are being returned to the animal facility.
8. Personnel who transport animals or soiled cages should promptly clean up all spills of soiled bedding. Please report cage spills and escapees immediately to the IACUC office at 448-3904.
9. Transport of large animals (dogs, cats, swine, etc.) must be done by LACU personnel using designated and IACUC approved conveyance. Rabbits may be transported in an appropriate transport by named individuals in an approved protocol who have undergone hands-on training to the satisfaction of LACU and the IACUC.

TRANSPORTING ANIMALS OUTSIDE OF A BUILDING

The following additional policies apply when transporting animals outside of a building (e.g., between the Coleman building and the VA Medical Center):

1. Only rodents and *Xenopus* may be transported outside of a building by non-DCM personnel.
2. The shoebox cages must be placed inside of an opaque container with a secured lid to shield the animals from public view. This container must be made of a material that

can be cleaned and sanitized between uses. A Rubbermaid or similar container modified with ventilation holes or the LACU provided durable totes are recommended. Again, the yellow gowns provided as PPE are not adequate for use as drapes or coverings for shoebox cages transported across campus.

3. When the outside temperature is between 50°F and 85°F, the animals may be transported without climate-controlled vehicles.
4. Animals must be transported within climate-controlled vehicles when the outside temperature is below 50°F or above 85°F. The heating/cooling system of the vehicle must maintain the inside temperature of the vehicle within this range (50° to 85°F).
5. Personal vehicles may be used to transport animals if the following additional conditions are met:
 - The use of personal vehicles for transport of animals must be specified in the protocol and approved by the IACUC.
 - The container used to transport the cages must be secured to the inside of the vehicle to prevent spillage (e.g., using bungee cords or other suitable restraint).
 - Animals should be protected from direct sunlight and public view.
 - Each transport vehicle must undergo semi-annual inspections by the IACUC.