NU–IACUC POLICY

Northeastern University Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

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| Transportation of Laboratory Animals |

Approval Date: 05/11/2022

**Background**

Regulatory requirements for the transportation of animals can be found in the [*USDA Animal Welfare Act and Animal Welfare Regulations*](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/downloads/bluebook-ac-awa.pdf) and the [*Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/Guide-for-the-Care-and-use-of-laboratory-animals.pdf)*.*

All applicable regulations must be followed during transport.

In accordance with the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 8th Edition*, “Animal transportation may be intra-institutional, inter-institutional, or between a commercial or noncommercial source and a research facility. For wildlife, transportation may occur between the capture site and field holding facilities. Careful planning for all types of transportation should occur to ensure animal safety and well-being. 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 Guide* discourages use of private vehicles to transport animals because of potential animal biosecurity, safety, health, and liability risks for the animals, personnel, and institution.

**Policy**

Principal Investigators **must** provide justification to remove animals from the centralized facilities in an IACUC Protocol, or Amendment Form. Animals cannot be moved until IACUC approval has been granted. [Please note, this does not apply to animal exports managed by DLAM.]

The use of a professional courier specializing in live animal shipments is the ***preferred*** method for transporting animals from Northeastern facilities. Contact DLAM to arrange shipment using professional couriers.

If Principal Investigators need to transport animals from the centralized facilities to other locations, and the use of a professional courier is not possible or impractical, the following conditions apply:

* Animals must be transported in a manner that ensures they cannot escape.
* Animals must be shielded from public view, whenever possible.
* Cages can be wrapped in a blue drape or placed in a dark plastic bag supplied by DLAM, in transport containers with adequate airflow, or on stable carts.
* Cages can be transported between facilities on the main campus in a soft sided cooler. This cooler insulates the animals from outside temperatures. They also can be decontaminated between shipments.
* When animals are transported in their cages, remove or flip the water bottle upward to prevent water from leaking into the cage.
* When transporting cages on a cart, avoid stacking cages since it can decrease air circulation through the filter cover/cage top and can lead to instability on the cart.
* Drape or cover cages on a cart or in transparent transport containers. Disposable gowns do not provide adequate coverage and cannot be used. Consult DLAM for appropriate transport containers or suggestions on proper drape material.
* Animals must be placed into new clean cages when returned to the housing rooms. Animals that will not return to the animal facility may be transported in alternative transport containers.

**Personal vehicles:**

Transporting animals in personal vehicles is discouraged, however, there may be situations when it is necessary. Personal vehicles are defined as motor cars or trucks that are not owned by Northeastern University and operated by a Northeastern animal user. Unacceptable vehicles for animal transport include taxis, vehicles obtained via Ride App (e.g. Uber, Lyft, etc), bicycles, motorcycles, and scooters.

If use of a personal vehicle is necessary, the following stipulations must be met:

* Vehicles used to transport animals are subject to the same IACUC Inspection requirements as other housing and support areas. A Vehicle Inspection Form is included below.
* Vehicles must be temperature-controlled, mechanically sound, be current on state inspection requirements, and in good repair.
  + Animals must only be transported in climate‐controlled spaces that are cooled/heated to appropriate temperature range before loading animals. Trunks, truck beds, and cargo boxes without climate control are NOT appropriate for transporting animals.
  + Animal containers must be secured to reduce movement during vehicle operation and remain upright during transport.
  + Animal containers should be on an impervious surface (e.g. plastic bag) and should not come in direct contact with vehicle upholstery.
  + Only one species should be transported at a time.
  + Vehicle should be cleaned prior to and after transport of animals.
* Animals must be transported directly from the point of origin to the destination. Personal vehicles must be adequately fueled before picking up animals, and extra stops should be avoided.
* Only protocol approved personnel and/or DLAM staff may be present in the vehicle.
* Animals must never be left in an unattended vehicle. Trips that require refueling or other stops *should* be undertaken with at least 2 approved personnel to ensure that 1 person is always with the animals.
* A back‐up vehicle and driver shouldbe on call whenever animals are being transported. Contact the DLAM office (during working hours) 617-373-3958, or the DLAM On Call Person (after hours) 617-373-3754 for emergencies affecting animal health during transport.

Additional species-specific considerations for vehicular transport:

* *Rodents*
* Rodents must be transported in appropriate shipping crates with snap top lids with filter protected ventilation, to contain allergens and exclude potential pathogens/ contaminants, and provide security during transportation. Standard rodent caging is NOT acceptable for vehicular transportation.
* Regardless of transit duration, food and water must be available. Food can be provided in dry rodent chow form or in gel formulations. Water can only be provided in a gel formulation.
* *Aquatic Species (ectotherms)*
* Aquatic animals **must** be transported in leak-proof containers with secured lids or in an appropriate plastic film bag. Those animals housed in bags **must** be transported in a leak-proof secondary container.
* There *must* be enough water within the container that allows for sufficient dilution of nitrogenous wastes secreted during the transport time as to reduce toxic effects of the wastes and to provide enough air.
* Temperatures aquatic animals are exposed to **must** be appropriate for that species. Use of coolers or Styrofoam boxes for purposes of temperature control may be needed for some species.
* To minimize water spoiling and unless otherwise indicated, aquatic animals *must* not be fed in their transport container.
* *USDA-regulated species*
* All Animal Welfare Act and Regulations must be followed. Communicate with DLAM staff prior to transporting any USDA-covered species.
* Animals **must** be transported in species- appropriate caging that prevents escape, allows for normal postural adjustment, and is constructed in such a way as to withstand the rigors of transportation.
* When transporting animals in caging other than the standard housing for that species, every effort *should* be made to minimize the duration spent in the transport cage to the shortest time possible.
* When using a personal vehicle for transporting animals, the owner’s personal auto insurance will be used for any accidents, etc. Any liability costs beyond the individuals personal insurance may be covered Northeastern University.

**Associated Documents:**

Investigators should follow established species-specific SOPs for transportation, where applicable. Contact DLAM for more information on species specific transportation SOPs.

* Guidelines on Transporting Ferrets

**Restrictions (these circumstances where animals cannot be transported):**

1. The outside temperature is below 45**°** F or above 85**°** F(unless in a soft-sided cooler)
2. Animal infected with BL-2 or higher agents.
3. Animals treated with radioactive materials.
4. All transfers of genetically modified animals must have a MTA (Material Transfer Agreement) between the two institutions prior to the transfer.

***Northeastern University***

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (NU-IACUC)

**Telephone:** 617-373-3958 **Email:** [iacuc-office@northeastern.edu](mailto:iacuc-office@northeastern.edu)

**Website:** <https://dlam.neu.edu/>

Vehicle Inspection Form:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date:** | | | | | |  |
| **Campus:** Boston/Nahant (circle) | | | | | |  |
| Vehicle type: | | |  | | | |
| Vehicle license plate # | | | |  | | |
| Individual present at inspection & Vehicle Owner: | | | | |  | |
|  | | | | | | |
| **IACUC Protocol Information** | | | | | |  |
| PI Name | |  | | | | |
| Protocol # | |  | | | | |
| Species |  | | | | | |
| Details of procedures previously performed on animals: | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | |
| **Facility Information:** | | | | | |  |
| Animals’ origin: | | | | | | |
| Animals’ destination: | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | |
| **Vehicle details** | | | | | | Yes or No |
| Registration & Inspection sticker on car are current | | | | | |  |
| Appears in good working order | | | | | |  |
| No dashboard lights lit (i.e. engine light) | | | | | |  |
| Is climate controlled | | | | | |  |
| Is set up to secure animals in passenger area | | | | | |  |
| Is set up in an area without direct exposure to sun or environmental extremes | | | | | |  |
|  | | | | | | |
| **Investigator Confirms:** | | | | | | Yes or No |
| Only those approved to work with animals will be in car | | | | | |  |
| Direct trip, no stops unless necessary | | | | | |  |
| Has someone available at loading dock to receive animals | | | | | |  |
| Will transport animals in approved crates, carriers, containers | | | | | |  |
| Only one species should be transported at a time. | | | | | |  |
| Animal containers should be secured to reduce movement during vehicle operation and to remain upright during transport. | | | | | |  |
| Vehicle should be sanitized prior to and after transport of animals. | | | | | |  |
| Investigators should follow established species-specific SOPs for transportation, where applicable. | | | | | |  |
| Animals will have access to food/water as appropriate | | | | | |  |
| **Signature/Date:** | | | | | | |