

IACUC Guideline 04: Animal Transport

Purpose: This guideline is designed to ensure the safe and humane transport of live UW research animals in motorized vehicles, with a focus on protecting both the animals and the people involved.

Background

Transporting animals, especially in personal vehicles, requires careful planning to maintain proper conditions and reduce the risks of travel-related injury, illness, disease, or stress. These guidelines provide clear steps to ensure safety and compliance with both University and federal regulations, covering general animal transport as well as considerations for wild animals, livestock, and animals with infectious diseases.

General Transport

When animals are transported via motorized vehicles *any distance*, please observe the following:

1. Animals must be on an approved IACUC Animal Use Protocol, and the protocol must describe animal transport conditions.
2. Animals should be transported in an appropriate cage/kennel/enclosure, please consult with UW-IACUC for appropriate caging options. When using an enclosure other than the animal's home cage, cleaning and disinfecting may need to occur before & after transport.
3. Vehicle must be inspected and approved by the IACUC Office prior to use and meet the criteria outlined in the **UW - Animal Transportation Vehicle Checklist**.
4. A climate-controlled vehicle may require pre-heating or pre-cooling to achieve proper temperatures (45°F - 85°F) with adequate ventilation for all animals and must contain the cages in a stable and safe manner to prevent shifting/tipping/overturning. Animals must remain in comfortable conditions throughout the entire transportation process, including loading/unloading of the vehicle.
5. Cargo areas of trucks or trailers used in the transportation of animals must be cleaned and disinfected as needed to prevent contamination during animal transport. The sanitation of the vehicle includes all flooring, walls, or any other surface that could be in contact with the animals or equipment. The IACUC Office can provide support in identifying sufficient cleaning products.
6. Researchers should be mindful of loading/unloading and have appropriate procedures in place for transporting through public areas. This may include having a handcart for moving cages and a covering for the cages, having a second person on hand to remain with the vehicle and other animals, and completing the loading process quickly to return the animals to more comfortable conditions.

7. Be aware of potential zoonotic hazards associated with the animals and make sure occupants are protected (PPE).

Transport - Field Study Animals

Besides the General Transport comments above, transportation of wild animals requires additional preparation and precautions due to the complexity of regulations related to acquisition, possession, and transportation, often coupled with unique and/or remote travel conditions.

1. Wild-caught animals require transportation in an appropriate enclosure to prevent direct contact from the occupants, to protect personnel and minimize exposure to personnel.
2. Obtain and keep a copy of all appropriate permits from all appropriate agencies (federal, state, and local) before acquiring wild animals.
3. Wild animals are of unknown health status and should be presumed to carry zoonotic agents.
4. Animals may need to be watered and fed before transportation and must be visually checked every 4 hours during transit.

Transport – Livestock Animals

Livestock transported is done with IACUC-approved trailers.

1. All trailers must be approved by the IACUC Office prior to use and must meet the criteria outlined in the **UW - Animal Transportation Vehicle Checklist**.
2. Long-duration travel must abide by transportation rules given by the IACUC Office and/or Attending Veterinarian, including food & water access, bedding/flooring requirements, and required rest and/or exercise breaks.

Transport of Animals with Infectious Disease

The transportation of animals with an infectious agent may be jointly arranged through the UW IACUC and Biosafety Offices to ensure that adequate protections are in place for all animals and humans involved.

Emergency During Transport

1. To avoid delays, the vehicle should be in good working order and transport should be undertaken during travel-favorable weather conditions.
2. At minimum, the driver must carry an Animal Transport Inventory or equivalent state or international Certificate of Veterinary Inspection, wildlife permit or state Certificate of Permit. If applicable, the driver should also have any hazard-specific SOPs, relevant USDA forms, certificate of veterinary inspection or other documents as required by local, state and federal laws.

3. Any accidents, escapes, or other events that impact animal health or well-being during transport must be promptly reported to Attending Veterinarian and the IACUC using the Adverse Event form.

Resources

1. Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 8th Edition. 2011.
<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/Guide-for-the-Care-and-use-of-laboratory-animals.pdf>
2. NIH Guidelines for Rodent Transport.
https://oacu.oir.nih.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/arac-guidelines/b1a_rodent_transport.pdf
3. NIH Guidelines for Non-Rodent Transport.
https://oacu.oir.nih.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/arac-guidelines/b1b_nonrodent_transport.pdf
4. The National Academies of Sciences - Transportation of Laboratory Animals: Proceedings of a Workshop (2017) (<http://nap.edu/21734>).

History of Revisions

Guideline 04 – new guideline approved – IACUC meeting 08/20/2020