VASDHS Veterinary Medical Unit
Standard Procedure

Transportation of Laboratory Animals

1 General Requirements

1.1 For the purposes of this SP, transportation is defined as transfer of any live laboratory animal to or from the animal's regular housing room to any other room inside or outside the 6th floor, excluding transportation by vendors.

1.2 Transportation of animals shall be in accordance with all applicable local, state and federal regulations, as well as the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*.

1.3 Animals may be transferred from Veterinary Medical Unit (VMU) to labs on the 6th floor, provided the lab is listed in the approved protocol as an animal testing or holding area. However, animals may not remain in laboratories for longer than 12 hours a day without prior permission from the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

1.4 Approval must be granted by the IACUC to transport animals outside the 6th floor as part of a scientific protocol (for example, if equipment needed for a study is only available elsewhere).

1.5 When permanently transferring animals to another facility, approval must be granted by the Veterinary Medical Officer (VMO) to transport animals outside the 6th floor.

1.6 Live animals that contain, or may contain, hazardous or radioactive materials must not be transported outside the 6th floor without explicit approval and direction from the appropriate safety officer, IACUC and VMO.

1.7 If animals are transported outside the 6^{th} floor, the animal elevator must be used. No keys can be given out for this elevator; therefore there can be no after-hours transfers of animals. In addition, the VMU staff must coordinate each transfer of animals to and from other facilities (even if only for short-term procedures).

2 Hand-Carrying Animals

2.1 Small animals inside appropriate containers (see sections 5.2 and 5.3) may be hand carried (either physically holding a single container or using a cart) to the destination provided that:

2.1.1 The expected travel time is 15 minutes or less.

2.1.2 The weather is fair, and the temperature is not above 80^{o} F, if animals are to be carried through an outdoor area.

2.2 Discretion is essential when hand-carrying animals outside the 6th floor. If not using transport containers from commercial vendors (see. 5.3.1), a cloth or paper wrap must cover containers in order to eliminate any indication that animals may be inside.

2.3 Animals that may be expected to vocalize during transport (such as guinea pigs) may not be hand-carried through public areas

3 Use of Vehicles for Transportation of Animals to Other Facilities

3.1 Only approved vehicles may be used for transporting animals, provided the vehicle is reliable, heating and air-conditioning equipped, easily sanitized and fully enclosed (no open vehicles). If transporting to UCSD, Scripps or Salk, their approved transport vehicles must be used. If transporting elsewhere, commercial carriers must be used unless permission is given by the VMO.

3.2 The driver or a passenger must be a member of the responsible investigator's staff or the VMU staff unless a common carrier or other institution transport service is used.

4 Transportation via Common Carrier

4.1 All transportation by common carrier must be scheduled for overnight delivery when possible.

4.2 Animals must be packaged according to requirements of the carrier and any applicable government regulations and be supplied with enough food and water (or appropriate moisture) to last 2 days longer than the expected shipment time.

5 Requirements of Containers used for Transportation

5.1 Primary and secondary containers must be secured against spillage in case the container is accidentally dropped or tipped over. Simply taping the container(s) securely with strong tape will suffice in most instances. Be sure tape does not cover air holes or filters.

5.2 Containers for Transportation Within the 6th Floor

5.2.1 A species-appropriate standard cage with a filter top may be used for small animals.

5.2.2 For immune compromised animals or for larger numbers of animals, the VMU's IVC transport rack may be used.

5.2.3 Rabbits may be transported in plastic rat or guinea pig cages on a cart or hand-carried in a cardboard or plastic pet carrier.

5.2.4 Swine may only be transported in swine transport units. It is the Principal Investigator's staff's responsibility to clean any feces or urine that leaks from these transport units immediately.

5.3 Containers for Transportation Outside the 6th Floor

5.3.1 For rodents, clean transport containers from commercial vendors are ideal for all modes of transportation. If rodents are transported by common carrier, this is the only acceptable shipping container.

5.3.2 A species-appropriate standard cage equipped with a filter top and taped closed may be used for hand-carrying or driving rodents. See section 2.2.

5.4 For larger animals such as rabbits, opossums and swine, airline- acceptable animal carriers (such as Vari-Kennel) are ideal regardless of transportation method. Any other container must be specifically approved by the VMO.

6 Reference SPs and Documents - the following SPs should be referenced and read as part of the complete animal care program.

6.1 Species Specific Husbandry SPs

6.2 Weekend and Holiday Animal Care

6.3 Access of Personnel into VMU

6.4 Management of Rodents Housed in Laboratories

6.5 Veterinary Care

6.6 Caretakers Guide to Common Health Problems

6.7 Transfer of Animals Between Facilities

7 AUTOMATIC REVIEW DATE

May 2028

8 FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY

Veterinary Medical Officer

9 APPROVED

May 2025

10 SUMMARY OF CHANGES

3.1 Clarifying the ability to sanitize the transport vehicle

3.1 Specifying the types of vehicles to be used

6.0 Changed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to Standard Procedure (SP)

11 RESCISSION

Version dated October 2022