

# University at Buffalo Institutional Animal Care and Use Program Policy on Animal Transportation

## Purpose

This policy provides standards for the transportation of vertebrate research animals within and between animal facilities at the University at Buffalo and off-campus locations. This policy has been developed to ensure compliance with all regulatory and accreditation standards. It replaces a former LAF SOP (1.D.1.), as this matter is better handled via IACUC policy to comply with the following:

The Animal Welfare Act and Regulations, 9 CFR Part 3, Subparts, §3.13-3.19 (dogs), 3.35-3.41 (hamsters), 3.60-3.66 (rabbits) and 3.136-3.142 (applies at UB to deer mice, chinchillas, ferrets, pigs and sheep) provide transportation standards for various species.

*Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*, Eighth Edition, pp. 107-109: “**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.**”

## Definitions

- **Research Personnel**: Any undergraduate student, graduate student, post-doctoral student, laboratory employee (technician, lab manager) or Principal Investigator (PI) that performs (including assists with) any procedures on live vertebrate animals in accordance with an approved IACUC protocol.
- **Types of Animal Transportation**:
  - **Vendor-to-LAF**: Typically handled by commercial vendors or their carriers, but may occasionally require vehicular transportation via Lab Animal Facility (LAF) or Research Personnel
  - **Intra-Facility**: UB Lab Animal Facility (LAF)-to-Adjacent UB Laboratory (“UB Lab”)
  - **Inter-Facility**: UB LAF-to-Non-adjacent UB LAF **or** Non-adjacent UB Laboratory (may require moving between buildings on one campus or between campuses via vehicular transportation)
  - **Inter-Institutional**: UB LAF to/from Another Institution (i.e. VA or Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center) via the LAF’s vehicular transportation.

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# Policy

## 1. General Transportation/Animal Movement Guidelines

- a. Contact the Lab Animal Facility (LAF) Staff to request any inter-facility or inter-institutional transportation requests requiring vehicular transport. See LAF SOPs 1.D.1. (LAF Transportation) and 1.D.5. (Exporting Rodents to Other Institutions) for details.
- b. Commercial vendors and/or their carriers transport most vertebrate research animals from the vendor to the LAF.
  - i. The use of personal vehicles is discouraged, in general, as it can result in allergen and animal pathogen exposure to the occupant and future occupants of the vehicle.
  - ii. Any exceptions must be approved by the IACUC (i.e. PIs that purchase unusual species such as fish from hatcheries and transport them to campus in personal vehicles).
  - iii. Any approved personal vehicles must be inspected prior to initial use and semi-annually thereafter by the IACUC.
- c. Most vehicular intra- and inter-facility transport of vertebrate research animals is conducted by trained LAF Staff using the LAF's dedicated transport van which is inspected semi-annually by the IACUC.
  - i. Transportation using any other vehicle and/or conducted by any research personnel is discouraged. If justified, it requires prior approval by the IACUC. Such vehicles must be inspected semi-annually by the IACUC.
  - ii. Public transportation (use of bus or train) to transport animals is strictly prohibited!
  - iii. Outdoor pedestrian transportation is strictly prohibited (i.e. carrying cages across campus between facilities)!
  - iv. Any vehicle (LAF or other approved) must provide adequate heating/cooling to maintain an appropriate temperature for the species (see LAF Husbandry SOPs for temperature ranges).
  - v. Logs of vehicular transportation should be kept to document the following: date, driver name, starting location and leave time, destination and arrival time, temperature inside the van, species, number of cages transported.
  - vi. Vehicles should be sanitized between animal transportation trips.
- d. Any research/testing/teaching use of live research animals outside of the Lab Animal Facilities (back and forth to UB Labs) must be listed and approved in the corresponding IACUC Protocol (Animal Use and Housing Section> Housing> Question #2: "Identify each non-vivarium location...").
  - i. Animals cannot remain outside of their animal holding rooms (LAF) for **more than 12 hours** unless scientifically justified and approved in the IACUC protocol.

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- e. Animals that cannot be suitably transported in LAF-provided rodent cages such as rabbits, dogs, pigs, and sheep, will be transported in plastic pet kennels of appropriate size or LAF transport carts between the LAF and UB Labs. Details of the transport must be described and approved in the IACUC protocol.
  - i. Labs must arrange for LAF staff to wash such items in the cage wash regularly.
  - ii. Disinfection methods for non-standard transport containers should be validated annually if the items cannot be put through the cage wash.
  - iii. Containers must be constructed in a way that avoids injury or escape of the animal.
- f. Rodent cages (or commercial shipping containers) used for transportation require:
  - i. The use of a new, clean cage or clean, autoclaved shipping container prior to movement (reducing allergens).
  - ii. Use of IVC cages, microisolator cages or rodent shipping containers (no open-top caging).
  - iii. When cages are used, lids must be secured to cage bottoms with tape.
  - iv. When cages are used, cages must be covered when transported outside the LAF: clean paper drapes, regularly laundered cloth or placement within opaque secondary containers.
- g. Water bottles/bowls must be either removed or inverted during transportation to avoid flooding/leaking/breakage issues, but animals should not be without access to water for more than 6 hours (the absolute maximum). Every effort should be made to minimize the time from preparation to delivery. Time without water is not expected to exceed 2 hours under most circumstances. (Hydration gel is placed into shipping containers used for interinstitutional transport.)
- h. Aquatic transportation (fish, frogs) should be described in the approved IACUC protocol and/or husbandry SOPs for the species. Specific recommendations vary based on species and may require additional permits depending on the project.
- i. Animals exposed to biological, chemical or radiation safety hazards require special guidance and approval from EH&S prior to planning any transportation. In general, animals exposed to biological or radiation hazards should not be transported in vehicles.
- j. Transportation should be avoided or rescheduled during times of extremely inclement weather (i.e. snowstorms) or when heavy traffic volumes are expected to cause significant delays.

## 2. Intra-Facility Transportation: UB LAF to Adjacent UB-Labs

- a. This describes the movement of animals **to and from labs** when the LAF is in the same building as a Lab or is in an immediately adjacent (connected) building. All movement occurs indoors.

- b. Animals must be transported in appropriate cages, carriers or carts that are properly covered from public view whenever they leave any Lab Animal Facility. Cages must be placed on regularly washed, well-maintained carts (instead of being hand-carried) and should not be stacked (use a monolayer of cages).
- c. Avoid public corridors and elevators whenever possible. Freight elevators must be used instead of passenger elevators whenever they are an available option outside the LAF.

**3. Inter-Facility Transportation: UB LAF to another UB LAF (same or different campus)**

- a. Arrange for LAF to transport animals using the LAF van (i.e. BEB animals moving to JSMBS). See LAF SOP 1.D.1. for more details.
- b. All general transportation/animal movement guidelines should be followed.

**4. Inter-Facility Transportation: UB LAF to a Non-Adjacent UB-Lab**

- a. If animals must be moved from a LAF to a UB-Lab that is not in an immediately adjacent building but CAN be reached via a completely indoor route, PIs must write and attach an SOP detailing the complete indoor route to their IACUC (last Supporting Documents section). The SOP must be approved by the IACUC as part of the protocol review process.
- b. Animals must be transported in IVC or microisolator cages placed on regularly washed, well-maintained carts inside lidded secondary containers (i.e larger, opaque plastic tote) with small holes for ventilation. It is especially important that there is no visible indication that animals are being transported!
- c. Avoid public corridors and elevators whenever possible. Freight elevators must be used instead of passenger elevators whenever they are an available option.
- d. If public corridors must be used, SOPs should include details about the timing of animal movement to avoid crowds. Be sure pathways do not traverse food service venues or student commons!
- e. Example: Hochstetter LAF to Bonner Hall Labs.

**5. Inter-Institutional Transportation: UB LAF to/from Roswell Park or VA Animal Facilities**

- a. Arrange for LAF to transport rodents in shipping containers using the LAF van. See LAF SOP 1.D.5. for export details.
- b. All general transportation/animal movement guidelines should be followed.

## References:

1. National Research Council. 2011. Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition. Washington (DC): The National Academies Press. pp. 107-109. [Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 8th edition. National Academies Press \(nih.gov\)](#)
2. National Research Council. 2006. Guidelines for the Humane Transportation of Research Animals. Washington (DC): The National Academies Press. [Guidelines for the Humane Transportation of Research Animals | The National Academies Press](#)
3. New York State Laboratory Animal Welfare Program Inspection Tool, 2025. [Laboratory Animal Welfare Program | New York State Department of Health, Wadsworth Center](#)
4. United States Department of Agriculture. 2023. Animal Welfare Act and Animal Welfare Regulations. [Animal Welfare Act and Animal Welfare Regulations \(usda.gov\)](#)

| Revision # | Description of Change  | Effective Date |
|------------|--|----------------|
| 00         | New IACUC Policy adopted to replace the former LAF SOP on the same topic and meet all referenced guidelines. | 08/01/2025     |

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