TITLE: Safe Rodent Transport On Campus

OBJECTIVE

It is often a research requirement for rodents to be moved between animal facilities at the Australian National University (ANU). Transport of rodents between facilities on campus has the potential to raise a number of animal welfare issues; such as animals accidently being dropped, exposed to bright natural light, or stress related to transport conditions. The person transporting the animals can also become a target for those who do not agree with the use of animals for research purposes. The requirements for the safe transport of rodents on campus are listed below.

Mode of Transport

On the Acton campus and at The Canberra Hospital cages may be transported on foot or by vehicle; in extreme weather conditions a vehicle must be used. Transport of animals using a bicycle, motorcycle, moped or similar is not permitted.

Packing for Transport

Rodents are to be packed into a primary sealed container that has the following requirements:
- Must be taped closed to prevent the escape of animals.
- Must be labelled with strain, number, sex, individual ID, AEEC number and where applicable OTGR and AQIS categories.

The rodents must then be placed into a secondary container. This container should be an opaque sturdy plastic container or similar with a properly fitted lid.

Except where transport takes place entirely within a building, the outermost container must be labelled to clearly show the name, address and contact details of the person responsible for the dealings, so that the person can be contacted should the package be lost, damaged or misdirected.
**During and after transport**

Cages may only be left in the secondary container for a maximum of thirty minutes. Food and water may only be withheld for the thirty minute transport period. After this time the secondary container must be removed and if animals are not used immediately food and water must be provided.

When moving animals from one facility to another for the purpose of being held for experimentation, it is advisable that the rodents be given 72 hours to acclimatise. This allows animals to recover from the stress of transportation and ensures that negative impacts on research are minimised. If animals are transported over a significant distance, it is recommended that you have a 4-7 day acclimatization period.

Any issues arising with transport such as animal death, animal stress, animal release, or cross contamination should be reported to relevant facility managers, the AEEC, OGTR and AQIS if relevant.

**AQIS and OGTR requirements**

Transport of animals from a Quarantined Approved Premises (QAP) is not permitted unless a specific procedure has been approved by AQIS relating to the relevant QAP.

The containment requirement for the transport of PC1 or PC2 animals are identical, they must be wholly contained inside a sealed unbreakable container and clearly labeled as PC1 or PC2. The packing procedure outlined above meets the required standard for transporting PC1 and PC2 rodents.

Animals that are housed in a PC1 or PC2 facility can only be transported to a facility or lab of the same status. This is regardless of whether they are GMO’s or not.

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**Appendix:**
1. Pregnant rodents and pups prior to weaning may require special provisions that should be considered at the time of transport. For pre-weaning animals, they must not be held for more than 30 minutes without a nursing mother available. Pregnant rodents should only be transported for the purposes of immediate use, unless other specific arrangements have been made.

2. For studies where immunosuppression may affect results, it is recommended that you consider allowing 7 days for the animals to acclimatise before beginning any experimentation.

3. When transporting a large number of cages and the animals are held in appropriate caging (e.g. transport shipping boxes or IVCs) they can be placed in a vehicle without the need for a secondary container. This may be important when transporting animals from the airport or between facilities in large numbers.

4. If animals are to be used and euthanized on the day of the transportation there is no requirement for acclimatisation.

6. The standard proposed in this SOP for cumulative husbandry is minimal. Researchers should consider the individual requirements of the animals as their continuing responsibility and the settling in period may require a longer period of increased surveillance until the researcher is satisfied the animals are acclimatised.

For information on the safe transport of rodents off campus or the transport of non rodent species please contact the Animal Services Manager in your area. Further information can be found at

Animal Ethics Infolink  www.animalethics.org.au
AQIS  www.daff.gov.au
NHMRC  www.nhmrc.gov.au
NSW DPI Animal Transport Codes of Practice  www.dpi.nsw.gov.au
OGTR  www.ogtr.gov.au
The MLA Transport Guide  www.mla.com.au