

DAR Policy

Transportation of Laboratory Animals

DEFINITIONS

Transport and *transportation* refer to physically moving animals out of a housing room.

Transfer means moving animals between Georgia Tech IACUC protocols and is discussed in other policies.

Non-motorized, wheeled conveyance means, for example, a cart or wagon.

POLICIES ARE IN BOLD CAPITALS BELOW

1. ANIMAL TRANSPORTATION MUST BE MINIMIZED

Animal transportation may jeopardize animal and human health and affect research results. Transportation is among the most distressing events in laboratory animals' lives. Maintenance of animal colony microbial control requires minimizing exposure. Animals should, therefore, stay at one institution and in one facility whenever possible. Additional transportation concerns include compliance with federal, state and local regulations; public perception of animal research; and containment of hazards.

2. RESEACHERS MAY TRANSPORT ANIMALS WITHIN THE HOUSING FACILITY WITHOUT PRE-APPROVAL

Neither IACUC nor DAR approval is required when moving animals within their housing facility. See Procedure below "Documentation When Taking Animals Out of Their Housing Room."

3. IACUC APPROVAL IS REQUIRED FOR TRANSPORTATION OF ANIMALS TO AND FROM GEORGIA TECH RESEARCH LABORATORIES

IACUC approval of justification for taking animals to laboratories for each procedure on a protocol is required due to the aforementioned transportation-associated challenges and because laboratories may not be equivalent to animal facilities in cage ventilation, lighting, humidity, temperature, monitoring, social housing, noise, biosecurity, sanitizable surfaces, etc. In addition, both the IACUC and AAALAC inspect all places where animals are taken, so a complete location list generated from IACUC protocols must be maintained. DAR does not provide laboratory delivery services. See procedures for transportation below.

4. RESEARCHERS MAY TRANSPORT BETWEEN IBB AND EBB ANIMAL FACILITIES OR MAY REQUEST DAR TRANSPORTATION SERVICE WITHOUT IACUC PRE-APPROVAL

Keeping in mind minimization transport between EBB and IBB housing facilities may be done by researchers at their discretion without DAR notification or IACUC approval or may be requested from DAR by researchers for a fee by filling out a "Transport Request" form at least 3 days in advance of the desired transport.

Animals may be transported between IBB and EBB by hand-carrying (maximally two cages), using a Georgia Tech automobile or using a wheeled, non-motorized conveyance.

5. TRANSPORT ROUTES MUST MINIMIZE EXPOSURE

If traveling outdoors, weather at the time must be considered and steps taken to avoid rain, snow, cold, wind and heat. Using non-motorized, wheeled conveyances on inclines should be avoided, but if unavoidable more than one person should have their hands on the conveyance. The route taken should be indoors and avoid the public to the extent possible. For example, when transporting between IBB and EBB the Molecular Science & Engineering building elevator should be used. The IBB and EBB atriums should be avoided. Public elevators should be avoided when possible and tunnels used where they exist and are practical to use.

6. RODENTS TAKEN TO NON-GEORGIA TECH LABORATORIES OR ANIMAL FACILITIES MUST NOT RETURN TO GEORGIA TECH

7. RODENTS FROM NON GEORGIA TECH-APPROVED SOURCES MUST UNDERGO PROFESSIONAL QUARANTINE PRIOR TO TRANSPORTATION TO GEORGIA TECH ANIMAL FACILITIES

ORIA maintains a list of Approved Animal Vendors. See procedure below “Rodents from Non-Approved Vendors”

8. GOLF CARTS AND CLUB CARS ARE NOT BEST FOR OUTDOOR ANIMAL TRANSPORTATION

Golf carts or vehicles like them may cause increased distress due to poor suspension (bounciness) and lack of climate control. In addition, payloads in these vehicles may be visible and are difficult to secure. Golf carts that overcome some of these limitations are available but are the same cost as a regular automobile or truck which can carry larger payloads, so are of little advantage.

9. TRANSPORT OF ANIMALS IN PRIVATELY OWNED AUTOMOBILES MUST BE IACUC APPROVED

The Guide for the Care & Use of Laboratory Animals, 8th edition states “Transportation in private vehicles is discouraged because of potential animal biosecurity, safety, health, and liability risks for the animals, personnel, and institution.” Use of DAR vehicles, other vehicles owned by Georgia Tech or use of professional animal transportation companies (for longer than on-campus trips) is, therefore, preferred. Use of private vehicles must be IACUC approved and may include circumstances where animal welfare is better or exposure of animals or people is reduced in private automobiles, or when DAR- or Georgia Tech-owned vehicles are not available, or their use is less practical or is less familiar to the driver. No one will be compelled to use their private automobile against their wishes. See Procedure for transportation in private automobiles below. Private automobiles are not included in GT semi-annual IACUC inspections.

From the Statewide Travel Policy section 2.3 “While driving a personal vehicle on state business, the State provides full liability coverage and personal immunity for the Traveler for damages and injuries the Traveler may cause to others. However, the State does not provide coverage for damages to your personal vehicle. Cost of repairs to a personal vehicle, whether or not they result from the Traveler’s acts, are not reimbursable. Under no circumstances will the State reimburse tickets, parking fines or violations related to federal and state statutes.”

10. TRANSPORT OF ANIMALS INFECTED WITH MICROBES OR CHEMICAL HAZARDS REQUIRES CONTAINMENT AND IACUC APPROVAL (WHICH ALWAYS INCLUDES EHS REVIEW)

Transport of animals that have been exposed to dangerous material must be minimized. With IACUC approval of justification hand-carrying, non-motorized, wheeled conveyance, DAR vehicle or private vehicle may be used for transport of ABSL1-infected or Chemical Hazard animals. Animals infected with

ABSL-2 agents must not be transported in private automobiles. Secondary containment and the biosafety symbol are required for ABSL-2 animal transport as well as risk assessment from EHS. (See DAR procedure for transport of ABSL-2 animals)

11. SOME PROCEDURES CARRIED OUT ON ABSL-2 ANIMALS IN IBB MAY REQUIRE TRANSPORTATION TO A RESEARCH LABORATORY BSC

DAR policy states that anesthesia, euthanasia, surgery and tissue harvest cannot be carried out inside occupied animal housing rooms and cubicle anterooms (see DAR policy). As long as the only BSC in IBB is located in a housing room, ABSL-2 procedures requiring a BSC must be done in research laboratories which may require transportation of infected animals back to the IBB facility.

12. CROSSING STATE LINES WITH ANIMALS REQUIRES DOCUMENTATION AND VETERINARY INVOLVEMENT

Meeting with an accredited veterinarian must occur before animals (other than mice and rats bred for use in research) cross state lines. Within 10 days of travel the animals must be examined by an accredited veterinarian who will provide health documents. IACUC approval is also required. Advanced planning is, therefore, necessary.

PROCEDURES

Special Care of cages when off ventilated racks

Rodent cages used at GT are designed to be on ventilated racks where HEPA-filtered air is pumped into and exhausted from each individual cage. Rodent cages have a partial filter top, but ventilation is limited when using the filter top alone compared to forced ventilation on the rack, so time off the ventilated racks should be minimized. Although allergen and pathogen exposure is potentially greater, filters may be removed from cage lids when cages will be off racks for extended periods.

As soon as cages are out of public areas opaque covers and other obstructions must be removed so that the filter is open to the air. Cages must not be stacked except during brief periods of transport because blocking of filters and subsequent suffocation can occur. Short of suffocation, carbon dioxide, ammonia, heat and humidity will increase inside the cage when it is off the rack or when the filter is obstructed with subsequent negative effects on animal welfare and research outcomes. Even with the limited circulation through filter tops, conscious rodents should not be held in the same room where rodents are being operated, anesthetized or euthanized. Rodents produce ultrasonic distress communications and odors that can lead to further distress (beyond that of transportation and limited circulation).

Documentation required when taking animals out of their housing room

The “Animal Sign Out Sheet” that can be found in each housing room on a clipboard must be filled out at the time of moving so that the Department of Animal Resources (DAR) can manage space on the racks which is fluid due to euthanasia, weaning and shipments. The sheet must be filled out at the time of transport and even for brief removal for a procedure; otherwise, the space might be taken prior to return.

After making reservations on SUMS (Shared User Management System) researchers may move animals to Procedure or Operating Rooms in the facilities where their animals are housed at their discretion without notification. “Prepare the animal last” to minimize animal distress is a dictum in the DAR

meaning that the room and materials should be set up including drawing drugs into syringes, warming up machines, gathering tools, etc. before an animal is brought into the room. After animals are recovered cages must be returned to the housing room and rack where they came from and placed adjacent to others on the same protocol, but the exact position of each cage on the rack is not important and may be done at researcher's discretion where there are open spaces. Up to two cages at a time may be hand-carried, or a non-motorized, wheeled conveyance may be used when transporting animals within their housing facility.

Procedures for minimizing time out of the animal facility

Preparing the laboratory in advance of bringing animals and returning animals as soon as possible is imperative. Animals should not be held in laboratories for extended periods for convenience or to combine unrelated trips. After IACUC approval transport to and from laboratories may be done by researchers without notification other than the filling out the Sign Out sheet in the housing room, but entrance into housing rooms after lights out (7PM for most rooms) must be avoided. When traveling through public areas cages or transfer containers must be made of or completely covered by opaque material.

Rodents from Non-Approved Vendors

Health status information from the source must be provided to a Georgia Tech laboratory animal veterinarian who will use it to determine what type of outside, professional quarantine and testing or re-derivation is required. Even if re-derivation was not originally indicated, it may be required based on quarantine test results. The shipping manager at the source will arrange transport to the quarantine facility, and a Georgia Tech DAR manager will arrange shipping from the quarantine facility. Researchers must not make animal shipping arrangements.

Procedures for Use of Private Automobiles

Animals must be placed in automobile passenger compartments preferably on the floor of the front seat as the back seat may have higher concentrations of carbon monoxide in older vehicles. Heating and air conditioning must be provided as needed. In some cases, it may be appropriate to carry euthanasia or tranquilizing drugs. This should be described in the IACUC protocol and planned in advance with a veterinarian. For trips within the city of Atlanta, no stops (e.g., stopping for lunch or running errands) should be made and the animals must not be left alone in an automobile. Emergency contact information should be available in the automobile. If a waiver or other documents are required by GT in the future, they must be signed by the driver in advance.