Guidelines for Transportation of Animals in Areas Outside Animal Facilities (Public Areas)

Animals and animal caging must be transported in a contained manner to protect the animals, minimize risk of escape, and to protect personnel along the transport route from potential exposure to animal allergens.

Reducing stressors by maintaining appropriate ventilation, avoiding temperature and humidity extremes as well as minimizing noise and odors play a significant role in reducing research variability. It is also important to maintain an animal’s health status by avoiding exposure to potential pathogens.

Animals must be transported safely and in a manner that minimizes stress. The cage, carrier or container must be escape proof, e.g., there must be a latch or locking mechanism to prevent unintended opening. Containers should not be needlessly jostled, tilted or unsafely stacked. A secondary enclosure (e.g., disposable box) should be used in addition to the primary enclosure when transporting rodents between buildings. Examine the interior of any disposable transport box used before disposal to assure animals are not left in the container.

Transportation of animals should avoid public areas. When it is necessary to transport animals through public areas, particularly outdoors, animals should be visually obscured using a shroud or opaque secondary enclosure. Personnel should be aware of the risk of possible reaction by those opposed to animal use.

To minimize release of bedding from rodent cages, animal dander and airborne animal allergens into the environment, personnel should ensure that filter tops are used on rodent cages or that cages, carriers or animals are covered with a drape or shroud during transport.

Empty, soiled cages (with or without bedding) or carriers should be handled in the same fashion. Soiled cages / carriers should be covered during transport and should avoid personnel areas. Soiled cages may also be contained in bags as a means of minimizing allergen exposure during transport. They should be returned to an animal facility as soon as possible.

Temperature extremes need to be avoided. Special precautions to protect animals from heat or cold stress or postponements are required when temperatures are below 45° or above 85° Fahrenheit. Inclement weather (e.g., rain) may also necessitate postponement dependent upon the planned mode (e.g., foot vs. controlled climate vehicle) and distance of transport.

Reusable enclosures should be sanitized between use to prevent the spread of pathogenic microorganisms, animal wastes and allergens. Clean and decontaminate cargo areas used in the transportation of animals as necessary to prevent contamination of future animal deliveries.

When any body fluids (blood, urine, saliva mucus), feces, or dirty bedding contacts any surface outside the carrier, it must immediately be removed and the area disinfected with an appropriate disinfectant.

Transporting animals in personal vehicles is discouraged. In many cases, the unit animal care staff can provide or arrange for transportation of animals. Individuals are encouraged to check on the availability of such service. If a personal vehicle must be used, plastic of a similar impermeable material should be placed under the transport cage / carrier to reduce risk of contamination.

For transport of animals to locations outside Purdue, contact the Laboratory Animal Program office for information pertaining to transfer. Individuals planning to transport live animals (or carcasses) exposed to hazardous materials (e.g., infectious materials, hazardous chemicals, radioisotopes) from one location to another should contact Purdue University Radiological and Environmental Management (REM) for specific guidance.