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 (band or bungee) to prevent unintended cage top opening. Containers must not be needlessly jostled, tilted or unsafely stacked. A secondary enclosure (e.g., disposable box or cloth tote) must 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 must 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 must 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 must be handled in the same fashion. Soiled cages / carriers must 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 must be sanitized between use to prevent the spread of pathogenic micro-organisms, animal wastes and allergens.

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.

EVPRP provides free transport services for rodents via a university owned climate-controlled vehicle. The vehicle cargo areas must be capable of being cleaned and decontaminated as necessary to prevent contamination of future transports. Principal investigators and their staff are strongly encouraged to use this service. To obtain transport through EVPRP complete the Mouse/Rat Movement Request Form (https://www.purdue.edu/research/regulatory-affairs/animal-research/guidelines-resources/index.php) and submit to animaltransport@groups.purdue.edu 2-3 business days prior to needed transport. Species other than rodents should be transported in appropriate university-owned, climate-controlled vehicles.
The use of private vehicles is strongly discouraged as a means to transport caged animals as it presents a risk of contamination due to exposure to allergens, zoonoses, and other hazards associated with animal exposure. The use of private vehicles to transport animals exposed to a hazard (radioisotope, bacterial, viral or chemical agent, etc.) is PROHIBITED by Purdue REM and EVPRP transport MUST be utilized. Animals may NOT be transported in private vehicles unless described in an approved IACUC protocol. The IACUC recognizes that there are emergency circumstances in which private vehicle transport is unavoidable, such as transportation across campus during conditions of inclement weather. Even under emergency circumstances, the IACUC encourages investigators to first contact EVPRP to make arrangements for transportation prior to using a private vehicle. If a personal vehicle must be used, the IACUC (pacuc@purdue.edu) must be contacted for approval of such personal vehicle transport if not described in the approved protocol. During vehicle transport, adequate heating/cooling must be available to maintain general animal comfort (i.e., a truck bed or car trunk is not acceptable). In addition, protection from direct sun and protection from public view must be assured. A method to contain waste (e.g., plastic sheet under the cage, container around animal cage, etc.) as well as a method to discourage allergens from contaminating the vehicle (container around animal cage, etc.) must be provided as allergens may impact future human riders. The cage inside of the vehicle needs to be stable and/or anchored to prevent tipping.

The only exception to the above paragraph in regards to the use of a private vehicle is for transport of commercially received rodent shipments at the Purdue University Fort Wayne (PFW) campus. As the transport from PFW Shipping and Receiving to PFW animal facilities would not be covered under any one protocol, and an animal facility owned vehicle is not available, the transportation guidelines allow the PFW facility manager to move the surface disinfected commercial crates from PFW Shipping and Receiving to the animal facility in a climate-controlled area of a personal vehicle. Shipments are received in commercial (primarily Jackson Labs) rigid and filtered containment crates that should prevent personnel and vehicle exposure to allergens and other hazards associated with animal exposure. In addition the number of shipments is few enough (approximately 6 or less per year) that coordinating ordering and delivery for when the facility manager is present should be feasible. This exception prevents the rodent shipment from potential climate extremes in the Shipping and Receiving vehicle.

For transport of animals to locations outside Purdue, contact your facility supervisor 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.