**Laboratory Rodent Transfer and Transportation Policy**

**PURPOSE**

To establish guidelines for the transfer of laboratory rodents between Principle Investigators (PIs) and the relocation of rodents between animal housing rooms, procedure rooms, PI labs, on-campus specialty facilities (MRI, Irradiator, micro-CT), vivariums and buildings. Rodent colonies at Brigham Young University (BYU) are valuable and of varying health status. The indiscriminate transfer of animals from one PI to another or from one facility to another may jeopardize rodent health and threaten the research of all research and researchers on campus.

**POLICY**

All transfers of rodents into and out of University animal housing rooms, procedure rooms, PI labs, and facilities and buildings on campus may only be done for scientifically justified purposes, with IACUC approval and with verification by the Vivarium Manager and the University Veterinarian. Rodents to be transported should not be under quarantine or isolation for an infectious disease and should not be of a lessor pathogen status or health quality than the colonies at the destination site. Certain transfers may require quarantine, isolation, health assessment, and management to control disease before use for research. Depending on the nature of the study an acclimation period of as little as 3-4 days and up to 2 weeks may be recommended. This policy serves as the official BYU IACUC position for the transfer and relocating of rodents between PI’s, animal housing rooms, procedure rooms, PI labs, specialized facilities and buildings (LSB, ESC, KMBL).

In order to optimize compliance with the above policy, BYU specifies when it is appropriate for investigators to transport their own rodents and how they will be transported, and when BYU’s Animal Resource Center (ARC) will manage and oversee the method of transport.

**POLICY JUSTIFICATION**

A policy for the transfer of rodents between PI’s for collaboration and the relocation of rodents between animal housing rooms, procedure rooms, PI labs, specialized facilities and buildings on campus is often essential to accomplish research goals. A number of issues must be addressed in order to accomplish this transportation with minimum impact on animal welfare and study parameters in accordance with the regulatory guidelines. These concerns include but are not limited to:

* Animal Welfare
* Compliance with federal, state and local regulations
* Impact on public perception of animal research
* Containment of any zoonotic pathogen or hazardous agent

BYU adheres to all federal guidelines and institutional environmental health and safety policies and specifically promotes the Policy:

* To minimize stress to animals by minimizing temperature fluctuations, vibrations, noise, and movement.
* To minimize health risks to BYU rodent colonies from pathogens.
* To minimize exposure of other personnel and the public to allergens from laboratory animals.
* To protect occupants of the building and drivers of vehicles used for transportation from allergens of animal origin, microorganisms, chemicals, radioactive materials and escaped animals.
* To minimize the time spent in public hallways, elevators, building lobbies, patient areas, study areas or other laboratories when rodents are transported between labs or specialty facilities and the vivariums.
* To prevent viewing of animals by members of the general public.
* To prevent escape of transported animals and concern by the public for exposure to any actual or perceived zoonotic pathogen.

**TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES**

Transportation containers must:

* Be a standard industry/commercial rodent shipping/transportation container. You must get your container from the vivarium manager. Carts must be used to avoid dropping containers.
* Contain a food and water source if rodents will be held within the transport container for longer than 4 hours.
* Use the same density requirements for general animal housing as described in The Guide (the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals)
* Be autoclaved to prevent cross contamination between animals of differing pathogen status.
* Provided free of charge, but will be charged for if not returned.
* Be signed out and returned for cleaning and autoclaving.

**Transport Procedures**

* *Within the vivarium*
* Animals may be transported in their home cage to any procedure room within the vivarium.
* Up to two cages can be carried by hand.
* More than two cages require a cart for transport from housing room to procedure room.
* *Within Buildings*
  + Use the approved shipping container for transport from vivarium to PI labs or specialty facilities.
* Animals should be transported on a cart and the container must be covered to visually obscure the animals from the public.
* Animal cannot be returned to the BSL 1 or BSL 2 vivariums.
* Animals cannot be housed in the PI’s lab or anywhere outside of approved animal housing for longer than 12 hours.
* Animals maintained outside of their housing facility longer than 4 hours must be provided food and water.
* Transportation of animals from the vivarium to the PI’s lab must be approved by the IACUC and transport described in the study protocol.

***Exception***: *Animals cannot be returned to the vivarium*. This policy is designed to reduce the risk of introducing rodent pathogens into the animal housing area, as the potential exists for animals or cages to come in contact with rodent pathogens in hallways, labs or imaging facilities. Options for PI’s in BSL 1 facilities are to:

1. Make use of the procedure rooms within the vivarium.
2. Use dedicated quarantine containment room upon return. A dedicated quarantine containment room or an “in-and-out” room will be available with scientific justification and IACUC approval.

* *Between Buildings:*
  + ORCA’s Animal Resource Center (ARC) must be contacted for transportation or the transfer of animals between disconnected buildings.
  + The transfer of rodents between buildings may only be done for scientifically justified purposes, with IACUC approval and with verification by the Vivarium Manager and the University Veterinarian.
  + Transfer of rodents between facilities will be done by ARC transport staff only, unless alternative methods are approved by the IACUC, the Vivarium Manager and the University Veterinarian.
  + The use of personally owned vehicles is prohibited. A dedicated vehicle, which can be sanitized after use, will be used to transport research animals when necessary.
  + There is no charge for this service if animals are being transferred from one ARC vivarium to another ARC vivarium and advance notification of five full business days is received.

***Exception:*** Animals may be moved to specialty facilities (MRI, micro CT, irradiator) outside the vivarium for procedures approved on the IACUC protocol and returned to the vivarium’s quarantine containment room without prior approval if the “in and out” room procedure was clearly described and approved on the IACUC protocol.

* An appropriate per diem will be charged for use of and housing animals in the “in and out” room.
* Temperature extremes must be avoided when animals are transported. While caging will insulate animals, exposure to extreme ambient temperatures can have adverse effects. When temperatures fall below 45F or increase above 85F, special precautions, such as a delay in transport, may need to be taken to ensure temperatures are maintained consistent with the requirements of The Guide.

**APPLICABILITY**

* Faculty and lab personnel engaged in animal research
* Office of Research and Creative Activities (ORCA) Animal Care Staff
* IACUC Chair

**COMPLIANCE:**

Those who fail to comply with this policy may be reported to the IACUC and may be subjected to specific action including suspension of research privileges with animals.