

Transportation of Animals used in Research

Recognizing the critical impact the transportation of research animals has on the quality of research and that the welfare of the animals being transported is governed by a number of regulatory agencies, what are AAALAC International's expectations to ensure humane transport of research animals?

AAALAC recognizes that the continuation of humane transportation of animals is vital to the research enterprise. However, this can be a stressful experience for the animals. The total experience of the animal during transport is influenced by many factors. It is expected that the parties involved are aware of and comply with all applicable regulatory requirements for the transportation of animals and the critical importance of ensuring that the animals are treated humanely at all times during the journey. Please refer to AAALAC International's Reference Resources (<http://www.aaalac.org/resources/reference-resources/>) for additional guidance.

The following points should be considered:

Security: The consignor of the transportation containers and arrangements should ensure that the possibility of damage, misdirection and breach of biosecurity is reduced to a minimum by the use of suitably recognized reputable transport operators and sub-operators. Procedures should be in place to prevent theft or adulteration of transportation containers.

Species specific transportation: Containers and transport vehicles should provide appropriate environmental conditions for the species being transported and personnel should have appropriate knowledge relative to animal biosecurity to maintain the animals' health status.

Transportation logistics: Special attention should be given to the mode of transport and the journey times should be minimized as much as possible. Journey plans should be in place with alternate plans available in case of disruption of the original plan. The receiving institution should be informed about the itinerary and any changes in the timetable or any deviations from the plan which occur during transport. The receiving institution should have arrangements in place to receive the animals and trained personnel are available at the receiving institution to ensure the animals are removed from the shipping containers and inspected in a timely manner.

Commercial carriers: When commercial carriers are used, they should be appropriately licensed, and they should use well-designed animal transport vehicles which are capable of maintaining appropriate environmental conditions for the species being transported, which are documented through appropriate record keeping. The drivers must be trained in the transport of animals and the regulations thereof. When non-commercial carriers are used they and their vehicles should be approved by the IACUC /OB.

Planning for unexpected events: In case of an unexpected event, everyone in the transport chain should have a common understanding of contingency plans and knowledge of emergency contact persons who are available to respond during each segment of the journey. A clear emergency plan should be available and all the relevant information about contact persons, containment of the animals, and other relevant information should follow the animals on the crate or containers.

Intra-institutional transport: When animals are being transported within an institution, the IACUC/OB should approve the vehicle(s) and the personnel who perform this function, taking into account the relevant points described in this FAQ. Responsibility of the IACUC/OB: The IACUC/OB (or comparable oversight body) and veterinarian should evaluate transportation of animals to ensure compliance with regulatory expectations as well as attention to the animals' well-being.