Guidelines for the transportation of Laboratory Animals

**PURPOSE:**
The Department of Transportation (DOT), US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and MU Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) have established strict guidelines for the transport of all live animals. As a shipper/transporter you are responsible for taking all the necessary precautions to ensure the well-being of animals.

**REFERENCES:**
Transportation of rabbits is familiar with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 9, Chapter 1, Part 3-Standards, Subpart C, sections 3.61-3.66.
Marquette University Facility Services Driver Authorization Application

**PROCEDURES:**

**Prerequisite**
There are certain requirements that apply to all transportation of live animals regardless of the final destination. The following is a summary of the more important requirements:

- Be knowledgeable about the transportation guidelines for research animals.
- Be familiar with the appropriate provisions of the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals.
- For transport of rabbits be familiar with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 9, Chapter 1, Part 3-Standards, Subpart C, sections 3.61-3.66.

Cages and other shipping containers must meet the minimum standard for size, ventilation, strength, sanitation and design for safe handling. Some transportation-related stress is inevitable, but it can be minimized by attention to those factors (contact the ARC for assistance and for information on ordering rodent transportation crates).

**General Transportation Requirements**

**The IACUC Chair (or designee) is:**

- Responsible for oversight of these animal transportation guidelines, and may grant exceptions when it is considered in the best interest of the animal(s).

The IACUC will resolve conflicts regarding animal transportation issues.

The PI and ARC staff will plan all transportation of animals, including intra-institutional transportation, to:

- Minimize transit time and the risk of zoonoses.
• Protect against environmental extremes.

• Avoid overcrowding.

• Provide food and water/gel packs when indicated.

• Protect against physical trauma.

• Physically separate the animals by species to prevent interspecies disease transmission, and to eliminate anxiety and possible physiological and behavioral changes due to interspecies conflict.

• Avoid temperature extremes when animals are transported; special precautions or postponements are required when temperatures are below 45° F or above 85° F. At these temperatures, the welfare of the animals is jeopardized.

• Exercise care in handling enclosures used to transport live animals. Enclosures must not be tossed, dropped, needlessly tilted, stacked in a manner which may reasonably be expected to result in their falling, or handled in any manner which may cause physical trauma or stress to the animals.

• Contact the MU consulting veterinarian or ARC staff to verify that the animals removed from the housing areas can be returned. This is especially important for rodents, as rodents removed from Marquette’s housing facility and taken to another institution’s laboratory cannot return to MU until a quarantine room is established.

• If animal(s) will not be returned, notify the ARC staff the day the animal(s) are removed.

• Rats, mice, rabbits, and fish can only be transported by authorized staff (please see ARC on how to become authorized) and must be transported using a Marquette University vehicle. The Transportation Check-Off Sheet for Rats, Mice, Rabbits, and fish must be completed by the PI and/or ARC staff. This document will be saved in the PI’s folder in the Office of Research Compliance. MU trucking department can be contacted at 414-288-6103 for vehicle information.

• Please coordinate with ARC staff for animal transportation assistance. Animals cannot be transported on MU shuttles (for student transportation), trucks (flatbed) or buses, public transportation or taxi cabs.
Specific Transportation Requirements
Within MU Campus

- Animals can only be transported to facilities (e.g. laboratories, study areas) outside of the housing facility for which the Principal Investigator has IACUC approval. Please note that housing rats or mice in your lab for more than 24 hours requires special permission from the IACUC.

- Transportation of animals must be done in a direct and timely manner, avoiding public areas if and when possible.

- Any hallway, other than the 5th floor Animal Facility hallway is deemed public and as such, any movement of animals to a lab in these areas should be discrete and unobtrusive. Opaque or shielded transportation containers are recommended to reduce animal stress and micro-isolation filter tops are recommended to cover the cage tops.

- When weather conditions are beyond acceptable limits, (below 45° F or above 85° F) rodents must be transported in Marquette University vehicles between buildings on the MU campus in a cage using a micro-isolation filter top. The cages should be placed in a secondary container with a cover such as a breathable bag or box. When weather conditions are acceptable and rodents must be transported between buildings, rodents can be transferred in a cage using a micro-isolation filter top and using the power carts that are located in the Schroeder facility.

- When weather conditions are beyond acceptable limits (below 45° F or above 85° F) rabbits must be transported in Marquette University vehicles between buildings on the MU campus in appropriate carrying devices (Dog, cat carriers or rat cages with a micro-isolator). See Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 9, Chapter 1, Part 3-Standards, Subpart C, section 3.61. When weather conditions are acceptable and rabbits must be transported between buildings appropriate carrying devices would include (Dog, cat carriers or rat cages with a micro-isolator).

- Do not place cages in the hallways outside of the laboratories. This practice may result in spread of disease to the healthy rodent populations and staff. Return all empty cages to the ARC facility.

Between MU and Institutions in the Milwaukee Metropolitan Area
At times it is necessary to transport animals between MU and external facilities in the Milwaukee area. In these instances the following requirements apply:

- An approved outside vendor must be used for the movement of all animals between institutions except for mice, rats, birds, rabbits and fish. The transportation must be pre-approved by the IACUC, and described in the approved protocol addressing the mode of transportation, the number of animals transported, and the frequency of transportation.
• Rats, mice, rabbits, and fish can only be transported by authorized staff (please see ARC on how to become authorized) and must be transported using a Marquette University vehicle. The Transportation Check-Off Sheet for Rats, Mice and Rabbits must be completed by the PI and ARC staff. This document will be saved in the PI’s folder in the Office of Research Compliance. MU trucking department can be contacted at 414-288-6103 for vehicle information.

• Please coordinate with ARC staff for animal transportation assistance. Animals cannot be transported on MU shuttles (for student transportation), trucks (flatbed) or buses, public transportation or taxi cabs.

• There must be full coordination between animal facility management, including veterinarians in charge of receiving and sending animals. This is important to ensure that animals are received properly and that appropriate facilities are available for housing and all health reports have been reviewed and accepted.

• Newly transported animals should be given adequate time for physiologic, psychologic, and nutritional stabilization before their use. The length of time for stabilization will depend on the type and duration of animal transportation, the species involved, and the intended use of the animals.

**Between MU and Institutions located outside the Milwaukee Metropolitan Area**

Transfer of animals to locations outside the Milwaukee Metropolitan area is subject to additional requirements, the extent of which depends on the location, as well as policies of, the receiving institution.

The complexity of shipping requirements changes significantly depending on:

• The location of the receiving institution. For example, shipping outside the USA requires USDA/APHIS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service) certificate of veterinary inspection. Some States have specific quarantine requirements for some species.

• Please contact the ARC staff as soon as possible to make the necessary arrangements.

**Health Assurance Information**

• Facilities receiving animals typically require health assurance and type of care information before they will accept the animals.

• To facilitate the export of animals from MU, the ARC requests that investigators contact the ARC staff directly.

**Confirming the Shipment**

• The investigator and ARC staff will contact the receiving institution to provide the necessary health assurance and care information.
Once the receiving institution agrees to accept the animals, the investigator and ARC staff will confirm the shipping address. For species requiring USDA Health Certificates, the ARC will issue the Certificate for shipment.

**Shipping the Animals**

- The ARC will assist the investigator in making shipping arrangements.
- The ARC has contact information for commercial shipping firms that handle animals, shipping crates, and miscellaneous items such as transport gel.
- To ensure the safety and well-being of the animals, the ARC requires that animals not be shipped after Wednesday of a normal business week. Shipping later in the week may result in animals being left unattended over a weekend in an airport cargo containment facility.

**Transporting Live or Dead Animals Containing Hazardous Materials**

Transportation of hazardous materials in general poses special problems. This is significantly amplified (e.g. potential spread through excreta) when the material is contained in an animal. It is therefore important that appropriate precautions are incorporated both during the animal transportation and after animal arrival at the end destination. Due to complexity of these requirements, investigators planning to transport live animals containing hazardous materials or genetically modified organisms must contact Mr. Austin Fritsch (414-288-6654 austin.fritsch@marquette.edu ), Mr. Dennis Daye (414-288-8411 dennis.daye@marquette.edu ), and Dr. James Courtright (414-288-1476 james.courtright@marquette.edu ) for more information.