

Animal Transportation - Rodents

Purpose

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) describes the transportation of laboratory rodents between animal facilities located within or between campuses at Charles Sturt University or between Charles Sturt University and / or other registered animal holding facilities.

Responsibility

Principal investigator (PI) and their research staff, animal care staff, Animal Welfare Officer, Facilities supervisor / manager.

Materials

1. Species-appropriate animal transport cage
2. Climate-controlled transport vehicle.
3. Opaque drape or bag to cover the transport cage
4. Disinfectant
5. Personal protective equipment (PPE) such as mask, gloves, laboratory gown
6. Bags for dead animal disposal

Procedure

1. Transport and use of animals outside an animal facility must be approved by the Charles Sturt University Animal Care and Ethics Committee as part of a recognized project.
 2. Transport of animals must be in accordance with Clauses 3.2.5 through 3.2.8 of the Australian Code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes (8th edition, 2013)
 - a. Transportation by air should be in accordance with International Air Transport Association (IAIT) regulations and domestic transportation of animals should be in accordance with the relevant codes of practice.
 - b. Both suppliers and recipients of animals must ensure that there are satisfactory delivery procedures, with animals received by a responsible person. Charles Sturt University dictates that a 'responsible' person be one with sufficient expertise with the species transported to be able to assess the animal/s welfare accurately on arrival.
 - c. Effort should be taken to contain mice in such a way to minimise noise, vibration and extreme variation in temperature.
 - d. Following on-site transport, a minimum of 24 hours should be allowed for acclimation.
 - e. Following off-site transport, a minimum acclimation period of 3-7 days is recommended, although longer may be required for stabilisation of behavioural and reproductive parameters.
 - f. Rodents deemed to be unwell or injured should not be transported, unless it can be established that transport does not result in additional pain or distress
 - g The maximum allowable time outside a designated animal facility is 12 hours. If animals are transported by road between campuses, or 24 hours if transported by air.
2. Animal transport through public areas should:
 - a. Minimize transit time for animals
 - b. Reduce the risk of zoonoses and allergies to staff transporting animals
 - c. Prevent public exposure both of animals and to the public
 - d. Prevent escape of animals during transit between facilities
 - e. Protect the animals against potential contaminants and aversive conditions (extreme environmental conditions, physical injuries, etc.)
3. If animals will not be used in terminal procedures immediately after transport (i.e. need to be housed in a different facility), transfer should be approved by the receiving facility and staff available to meet the animals on their arrival.

4. Transport of rodents must be in filter top caging or closed transport containers, such as shipping boxes, to prevent the dispersal of allergens and other particles and debris and to protect animals during transit.
5. Animals should not be transported in holding cages either within the University or to external parties.
6. Food and a source of water (i.e. Transgel) should be provided if animals will remain in the cage for over two (2) hours.
7. Avoid overcrowding cages:
 - a. Use the same density requirement as for general housing
 - b. Males from different cages should not be transported in the same transport container or compartment.
8. Ensure that the transport cage or container is:
 - a. the home cage where possible
 - a. b. An appropriate size for the animals being transported
 - b. c. Will not cause injury to the animals
 - c. d. Able to contain the animals securely to prevent escape even if the cage is accidentally dropped or tipped over (for example, filter tops should be taped in place)
9. Service elevators and corridors should be used when available to avoid transit through public places.
10. Transport can be coordinated through the School of Animal and Veterinary Sciences. A fee will be charged for this service.
11. Outdoor transportation by foot is acceptable only over short distances, under 500m. An insulated secondary container (i.e. cooler) must be used when temperature is below 10°C or above 25°C.
12. Transporting animals in vehicles not specifically designated for animal transportation (e.g., personal or rented vehicles, including taxis) is prohibited. Only University Vehicles may be used.
13. Requirements for transport vehicles:
 - a. Maintain the vehicle's ambient temperature between 15 and 25°C.
 - b. Keep the vehicle clean and in good condition.
 - c. Sanitise the transport vehicle between transportation of animals of a different health status e.g. conventional to barrier status.
 - d. If a passenger vehicle is used, place plastic or a similar material on the floor or under the transport cage to minimise contamination and facilitate sanitisation.
 - e. Double bags should be used to transport dead small animals and appropriate containers for dead large animals.
 - f. Dead animals are disposed in the designated area
14. In the event of an animal's death in transit, Charles Sturt University's ACEC must be notified within 48 hours by submission of an unexplained death form.

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Reviewer	Dr Andrew Delaney