



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SAN ANTONIO

IACUC SOP:	Statement on Transportation
SOP#105.00	IACUC Approval: 8/7/2025

Purpose:

- Transportation of animals to and from Texas A&M University-San Antonio (A&M-SA), within or between campus buildings and between campuses is an essential component of animal care and use. Transporting animals requires heightened attention to ensure animal and human safety and the well-being of the animals.
- The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals states that animal transportation “should provide an appropriate level of animal biosecurity while minimizing zoonotic risks, protecting against environmental extremes, avoiding overcrowding, providing for the animals’ physical, physiologic, or behavioral needs and comfort, and protecting the animals and personnel from physical trauma.” This document will expand upon these principles for the investigators and laboratory and technical staff at Texas A&M San Antonio University.

Scope:

This SOP applies to all research personnel and protocols subject to oversight by Texas A&M-San Antonio.

Responsibilities:

Policy: Animal Transportation

- The Principal Investigator is responsible for following the procedures described in the Animal Transportation Policy and complying with any additional local, state or federal laws.
- A **Research Sample Transportation form** must be completed for all animal transportation on public roads not located on A&M-SA campus. Forms may be found on [IACUC website](#). The form may be used as an equivalent to the Animal Transport Inventory for animals shipped with no infectious, chemical or radiation hazards.
- Research or teaching-related transport between facilities must be described in an IACUC Animal Use Protocol and approved by the A&M-SA Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) before the transport takes place. Medical transport is exempt and management-related transport may be addressed in a standard operating procedure.
- The A&M-SA IACUC, and Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) are responsible for reviewing and approving transportation plans and standard operating procedures (SOP) for animals/projects that fall under their respective jurisdictions.
- The Office of Research Compliance is responsible for oversight of animal health & welfare during transit and for biosecurity.



General Procedures

- All methods of transporting animals must provide for the health and welfare of animals. Animals must not be transported with any other animal, substance, or device that will cause injury to the animal.
- Under no circumstances should research or teaching animals be transported by public transportation such as campus or city buses or shuttles.
- Transportation of animals must be done in a direct and timely manner, avoiding public areas as much as possible. In selecting the route, care should be taken to utilize the least congested areas and to avoid human patient areas, whenever possible.
- Enclosures containing animals must be secure and carefully handled. The enclosures must be maintained in a manner that will prevent them from tipping or falling and must be handled in a manner that will minimize any physical trauma or distress to the animals.
- Temperature extremes must be avoided when unacclimated animals are transported. When temperatures fall below 40°F (4.4°C) or above 85°F (29.4°C), special precautions (in addition to the climate-controlled vehicles) may need to be taken. A climate-controlled vehicle may require pre-heating or pre-cooling to achieve proper temperatures.
- Animal transportation must comply with local, state and federal laws and regulations. Transport of livestock, wildlife, USDA-covered species, hazardous materials, and interstate and international transfers typically require additional documentation, vaccination, testing and/or inspection before transport.
- Transport small animals in covered or opaque cages, carriers, or containers.
 - a. Primary enclosures must be constructed of materials that can either be sanitized or disposed of and must be escape proof. There must be a means to prevent unintended opening such as a latch or locking mechanism, tape, rubber band or a box-within-a-box. This applies to transport within public corridors as well as between buildings.
 - b. Primary containers for mammals & semi-aquatic animals must provide adequate ventilation. Plastic bags may be appropriate for fish and aquatic amphibians. Never use plastic bags to transport live mammals
 - c. Provide food and a source of water (such as a gel pack) if small mammals will be held within the transport container for longer than two hours.
 - d. Do not overcrowd transport cages.
- Transfers of specific-pathogen-free rodents must have prior approval from the Office of Research Compliance and the facility manager to maintain proper biosecurity.
- Exceptions to the transportation policy must be reviewed and approved by the IACUC. Emergency exceptions may be granted by the IACUC chair or Attending Veterinarian on a case-by-case basis and will be reported to the



committee at the next convened meeting. Any exceptions must still comply with local, state and federal laws and regulations or have a regulatory exemption.

- Animals inoculated, infected, or treated with project-specific hazardous infectious agent, chemical or radiation hazards require an agent/hazard-specific transportation SOP approved by the A&M-SA IACUC and/or A&M-SA IBC.

Vehicular Transportation including transport between or across state boundaries

- The optimal transport vehicle is A&M-SA animal facility-owned vehicle or trailer designated for animal transport. If A&M-SA motor pool or other A&M-SA common-use vehicles are utilized then the vehicle administrator must be informed of the intended use for animal transport and procedures must be followed to minimize contamination of the vehicle. The use of personal vehicles is discouraged. A&M-SA will not be responsible for any damage that may occur during transportation in private vehicles.
- All A&M-SA-owned vehicles and trailers used for the regular transportation of animals at A&M-SA must be inspected and approved by the IACUC prior to use. The IACUC will review regularly used animal transport equipment at a minimum of twice per year. Vehicles and trailers must be maintained in good repair and have regular safety inspections. Surfaces where the animals are held must be made of material that is easy to sanitize. The animal holding compartment must be free of any sharp edges, protrusions, entrapment hazards, slippery surfaces, or other areas that could cause injuries or animal welfare concerns.
- Personnel should remain with or in the vehicle when animals are on board and drivers should take the most direct route of transit.
- Do not smoke or make loud noises in the vehicle
- Small animals (rodents, fish, amphibians, reptiles):
 - a) Small animals must ride in the climate-controlled vehicle compartment or other climate-controlled container. Animals cannot be placed in the trunk, or other non-ventilated space, of any vehicle.
 - b) Transport rodents in a secure clean micro-isolation style cage (with a filtered top) or in a filtered transport container.
 - c) Animal should be protected from temperature extremes, direct sunlight, or visual observation by use of opaque primary enclosures, or secondary opaque boxes, bags, fabric, or other covering. Coverings and secondary containers must not inhibit ventilation.
 - d) Secure transport containers in the vehicle so to prevent shifting or tipping. Do not stack cages unless they are specifically designed for this purpose.



Emergencies During Transport

- To avoid delays, the vehicle should be in good working order and transport should be undertaken during travel-favorable weather conditions.
- At minimum, the driver must carry an Animal Transport Inventory or equivalent state or international Certificate of Veterinary Inspection, wildlife permit or state Certificate of Permit. If applicable, the driver should also have any hazard-specific SOPs, relevant APHIS/USDA forms, certificate of veterinary inspection or other documents as required by local, state, and federal laws.
- The driver should carry a cellular phone and emergency contact numbers to call for assistance in the event of a delay, accident, or disabled vehicle.
- In cold or warm weather situations, transport containers may have to be moved out of a disabled vehicle into another vehicle, building or sheltered area to avoid extreme temperatures while waiting for assistance.
- If an animal escapes, attempt to contain the animal and return the animal to secure containment.
- Any accidents, escapes or other events that impact animal health or well-being during transport must be promptly reported to ORC and the IACUC using the adverse event form.

Wild Rodents, Biological Hazards, Chemical Hazards & Radioactivity

- Animals inoculated, infected, or treated with project-specific hazardous infectious agents, chemical or radiation hazards require an agent/hazard-specific transportation SOP approved by the A&M-SA IACUC and/or IBC.
- The agent/hazard-specific transportation SOP approval must be obtained prior to transport and must comply with local, federal, and state regulations for the transportation of hazardous materials.
- **Contact DRC before Trapping/ transporting wild rodents.**

History:

Version 01 - Initial Approval: 3/4/2022: IO Approved 6/3/2022

Version 02- Approved 8/7/2025