

POLICY NUMBER: A-006
APPROVAL DATE: 3/8/2011
EFFECTIVE DATE: 3/9/2011

TITLE: VAPHS Animal Research Facility Policy for Transporting Rodents from the VA ARF to Off-Site Facilities

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to describe the requirements necessary for requesting transportation of rodents from the VA ARF.

2.0 REVISION HISTORY

Date	Revision #	Change	Reference Section(s)
February 16, 2011	N/A	New Policy	

3.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all VAPHS and Veterans Research Foundation employees (including those with WOC appointments) working with rodents within the VAPHS Animal Research Facility (ARF).

4.0 POLICY

Rodents may be transported from the VAPHS Animal Research Facility provided that the procedures outlined in Section 5.0 are followed.

5.0 PROCEDURES

5.1 Transportation Request and Approval:

To initiate the export process, the transferring Principal Investigator is required to obtain the written approval of the Animal Research Facility Supervisor or designee. Requests may be submitted to the ARF supervisor/designee using the ARF email address VHAPTHARF@va.gov. Rodents will only be transferred if the animals are described in the IACUC-approved ACORP from the receiving facility.

5.2 Transportation Methods:

All methods used to transport the animal must be done in a direct and timely manner. Animals shall not be transported with any other animal, substance, or device that may be expected to be injurious to their health or welfare. The Animal Welfare Act (AWA) regulations shall be followed in transporting regulated laboratory animals in intra or interstate commerce. The AWA specific enclosure standards are not applicable for hand carrying rodents in containers between buildings. Transportation of animals must also comply with applicable state and local laws and regulations.

5.2.1 Enclosures:

It is essential that primary enclosures be used in the transportation of animals and that they be escape proof, properly labeled, and provided adequate ventilation. Animals are to be transported in sealed containers that have filtered openings for aeration. Enclosures must be able to be sanitized or disposed of in order to prevent the spread of pathogenic microorganisms, chemicals, or radioactive materials. The enclosures should be opaque or shielded in such a way as to be nonstressful to the animals. Care shall be exercised in handling enclosures used to transport live animals. They shall not be tossed,

dropped, needlessly tilted, or stacked in a manner that may reasonably be expected to cause physical trauma or stress to the animals.

5.2.2 Temperature:

Temperature extremes are to be avoided when animals are transported and special precautions or postponements are required when temperatures are below 45 degrees Fahrenheit or above 85 degrees Fahrenheit. The VAPHS IACUC does allow transportation of animals in passenger compartment of cars so that the extremes of temperatures can be avoided. The transportation within a personal vehicle must be justified, reviewed, and approved in advance by the IACUC.

5.2.3 Infection Control

Containers being used for transport must be sanitized and disinfected at the receiving facility before being returned to the VAPHS ARF. Under no circumstances are live animals allowed to be returned to the VA ARF. In addition, caging that has not been cleaned and properly disinfected cannot be returned to the VA ARF.

5.2.4 Transportation of Animals Exposed To Biological or Chemical Hazards

NIH policy and AWA regulations require that the IACUC review animal study proposals for research with animals, including work with biological or chemical hazards. The transportation of animals that have been exposed to biological or chemical hazards or animals that may naturally be infected with human pathogens, must be evaluated to ensure that proper containment is utilized during the transport. Proper transport may include the use of closed or filtered transport systems and appropriate biohazard or chemical hazard warning labels.

5.2.5 Transportation of Animals Treated with Radioactive Isotopes

An IACUC- approved protocol is required for the use of any amount of radioactive materials in animals. Special transportation requirements must be addressed in the IACUC protocol. Investigators planning to transport live animals that have been administered radioisotopes should contact the Radiation Safety Officer for guidance. Warning labels are required on enclosures used to transport live or dead animals that are exposed to radioactive hazards. The specific hazard must be identified.

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Gretchen L. Haas, PhD
Research and Development Committee Chair

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