

1. PURPOSE

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) describes transportation and use of animals outside the animal facility.

2. RESPONSIBILITY

Principal investigator (PI) and their research staff, animal care staff.

3. MATERIALS

- 3.1. Species-appropriate animal transport enclosure
- 3.2. Climate-controlled transport vehicle, where applicable
- 3.3. Opaque drape or cloth bag to cover the transport enclosure, where applicable
- 3.4. Approved disinfectant
- 3.5. Personal protective equipment (PPE)
- 3.6. Bags for animal carcass disposal

4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1. Housing:
 - 4.1.1. Refers to the housing of an animal, in a cage, for an extended period of time (more than 12 hours) in an area that meets the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) requirements for animal facilities in terms of infrastructure and environmental conditions.
- 4.2. Holding:
 - 4.2.1. Refers to the holding of an animal for a short period of time, less than 12 hours, in a given area.
- 4.3. Procedure room:
 - 4.3.1. Refers to an area where animals are used for experimental purposes.

5. CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1. Transport and use of animals outside an animal facility must be described in the Facility Animal Care Committee (FACC) approved Animal Use Protocol (AUP). Work with animals outside the animal facility is not allowed unless adequate scientific justification is provided. Exemptions can be granted by the FACC.
- 5.2. All housing or procedure areas outside an animal facility must be listed in the AUP and inspected yearly by the FACC. If the area is found to be suitable, an ALPHA (Alternate Laboratory for Procedures and Housing of Animals) certificate will be issued. The ALPHA certificate must be posted in these areas.
- 5.3. Public access areas include roadway and areas outside the animal facilities.
- 5.4. The animal facility staff must be immediately notified in the event that an animal escapes during transport.
- 5.5. Animal transport through public areas should:
 - 5.5.1. Minimize transit time
 - 5.5.2. Reduce the risk of zoonoses and allergies
 - 5.5.3. Prevent public exposure
 - 5.5.4. Prevent escape
 - 5.5.5. Protect the animals against contaminants and aversive conditions (extreme environmental conditions, physical injuries, etc.)

- 5.6. Ensure that the transport cage or container:
 - 5.6.1. Is of an appropriate size for the animals being transported
 - 5.6.2. Will not cause injury to the animals
 - 5.6.3. Cannot be compressed
 - 5.6.4. Allows for adequate ventilation
 - 5.6.5. Is clearly identified
 - 5.6.6. Can contain the animals securely to prevent escape even if the cage is accidentally dropped or tipped over
 - 5.6.7. Can contain all animal excretions and body fluids
- 5.7. Service elevators and corridors should be used when available.
- 5.8. Transporting animals in vehicles not specifically designated for animal transportation (e.g., personal or rented vehicles, including taxis) is strongly discouraged.
- 5.9. Requirements for transport vehicles:
 - 5.9.1. Maintain the vehicle's ambient temperature between 10 and 25°C.
 - 5.9.2. Keep the vehicle clean and in good condition.
 - 5.9.3. Sanitize the transport vehicle between transportation of animals of a different health status.
 - 5.9.4. If a passenger vehicle is used, place plastic or a similar material on the floor or under the transport cage to minimize contamination and facilitate sanitization.
- 5.10. The use of a dedicated animal courier is recommended for long-distance transportation.
- 5.11. When transporting animals by air, adhere to [The International Air Transport Association \(IATA\) Live Animal Regulations](#)
- 5.12. When animal procedures must be performed in areas outside of the animal facility:
 - 5.12.1. Animals must be handled the same way they would be in the animal facility.
 - 5.12.2. Species-appropriate PPE must be worn.
 - 5.12.3. Procedures are preferably performed in an area dedicated for animal use.
 - 5.12.4. Non-essential employees must not be present.
 - 5.12.5. Door and interior window shades must be closed in procedure areas to avoid view and/or intrusion during the conduct of the procedures.
 - 5.12.6. Equipment should be cleaned between animals.
 - 5.12.7. Clean and sanitize procedure areas as described in SOP 536 - Procedure Room Maintenance. Cleaning activities should be recorded on a log sheet.
 - 5.12.8. Double bags should be used to transport small animal carcasses and appropriate containers for large animal carcasses.
 - 5.12.9. Animal carcasses should be returned to the animal facility for disposal in the designated area.

6. PROCEDURES FOR RODENTS

- 6.1. Transfers between the animal facility and procedure areas outside of the animal facility
 - 6.1.1. The maximum allowable time outside an animal facility is 12 hours, including transport.
 - 6.1.2. Transport rodents in filter top caging or closed transport containers, such as filtered shipping boxes, to prevent the dispersal of allergens, fomites, and other particles and debris.
 - 6.1.3. When using caging equipment to transport rodents, lids must be secured to the cage, e.g., using low tack masking tape or painter's tape. Invert or remove the water bottle during transport.
 - 6.1.4. When using a cart to transport cages, a measure needs to be applied to secure cages to the cart to prevent them from tipping over accidentally, e.g., using a strap to secure the cages to the cart or placing the cages in a large bin. Do not stack cages over each other.

- 6.1.5. Cages must be covered with an opaque cloth or placed in an opaque cloth bag to prevent public viewing of the animals within. Avoid using plastic bags to cover cages.
- 6.1.6. Food and a source of water, i.e., water bottle, should be provided if animals will remain in the cage or transport container for over 4 hours.
- 6.1.7. Avoid overcrowding animals during transport:
 - 6.1.7.1. Use the same density requirement as for general housing.
 - 6.1.7.2. Males from different cages should not be transported in the same cage or transport container/compartment.
- 6.1.8. Cages must be promptly returned to the animal facility for processing. Empty cages should be covered from view during transport.
- 6.2. Transfer between animal facilities
 - 6.2.1. All transfers must be approved by both the sending and receiving facilities.
 - 6.2.2. Prior to sending the animals, they should be examined and found to be fit for transport.
 - 6.2.3. Transport rodents in filter top caging or closed transport containers, such as filtered shipping boxes, to prevent the dispersal of allergens, fomites, and other particles and debris.
 - 6.2.3.1. Caging equipment must not be used to transport rodents to facilities outside McGill University. Animal shipping containers can be obtained from the animal facility.
 - 6.2.3.2. When using caging equipment to transport rodents, lids must be secured to the cage, e.g., using low tack masking tape or painter's tape. Invert or remove the water bottle during transport.
 - 6.2.3.3. Cages can be placed inside an opaque cloth bag to prevent public viewing of the animals within. Avoid using plastic bags.
 - 6.2.4. Food and a source of water, i.e., hydration gel, should be provided if animals will remain in the cage or transport container for over 4 hours.
 - 6.2.5. Avoid overcrowding animals during transport:
 - 6.2.5.4. Use the same density requirement as for general housing.
 - 6.2.5.5. Males from different cages should not be transported in the same cage or transport container/compartment.
 - 6.2.6. Outdoor transportation by foot is acceptable only on short distances, under 1km. An insulated secondary container, i.e., cooler, must be used when temperature is below 10°C or above 25°C.

7. PROCEDURES FOR SMALL AND LARGE ANIMALS (NON-RODENTS)

- 7.1. Transfers between the animal facility and procedure areas outside of the animal facility
 - 7.1.1. The maximum allowable time outside an animal facility is 12 hours, including transport.
 - 7.1.2. Small animals, such as rabbits, cats, and dogs, should be transported in carriers. Large animals should be transported in dedicated animal transport enclosure or crates.
 - 7.1.3. Carriers, enclosures, or crates must be covered with an opaque cloth to prevent public viewing.
 - 7.1.4. Carriers, enclosures, or crates must be cleaned between animals.
- 7.2. Transfer between animal facilities
 - 7.2.1. All transfers must be approved by both the sending and receiving facilities.
 - 7.2.2. Prior to sending the animals, they should be examined and found to be fit for transport.
 - 7.2.3. For non-human primates (NHPs) refer to SOP 518 – Transport of NHPs Between Facilities.
 - 7.2.4. Small animals, such as rabbits, cats, and dogs, should be transported in carriers. Large animals should be transported in animal transport crates.
 - 7.2.5. Provision of food and water for large animals should take into consideration the species being transported and the duration of transport. Consult the veterinarian for recommendations.

7.2.6. Outdoor transportation by foot is not recommended.

8. REFERENCES

- 8.1. McGill University [Policy on permission to use animals in laboratories outside of the animal facility.](#)
- 8.2. Office of the Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation) Animal Compliance Office, [ALPHA certificate.](#)
- 8.3. Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) [guidelines: Mice](#), 2019.
- 8.4. Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) [guidelines: Rats](#), 2020.
- 8.5. Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) [guidelines on: procurement of animals used in science](#), 2007.

SOP REVISION HISTORY

DATE	NEW VERSION
2015.05.01	3.6. Bags for dead animal disposal
2015.05.01	4. DEFINITIONS 4.1. Housing: 4.1.1. Refers to the housing of an animal, in a cage, for an extended period of time (more than 12 hours) in an area that meets the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) requirements for animal facilities in terms of infrastructure and environmental conditions. 4.2. Holding: 4.2.1. Refers to the holding of an animal for a short period of time, less than 12 hours, in a given area. 4.3. Procedure room: 4.3.1. Refers to an area where animals are used for experimental purposes.
2016.02.18	5.5. The animal facility staff must be immediately notified in the event that an animal escapes during transport.
2016.02.08	5.12. When using a cart to transport cages, a measure needs to be applied to secure cages to the cart to prevent them from tipping over accidentally (e.g., using a strap to secure the cages to the cart or placing the cages in a large bin).
2016.09.22	5.2 All housing or procedure areas outside an animal facility must be listed in the AUP and inspected yearly by the FACC. If the area is found to be suitable, an ALPHA (Alternate Laboratory for Procedures and Housing of Animals) certificate will be issued. The ALPHA certificate must be posted in these areas.
2016.09.22	5.10. When using caging equipment for transport, lids must be secured to the cage (e.g., using low tack masking tape or painter's tape).
2016.09.22	6. REFERENCES 6.1. McGill University Policy on permission to use animals in laboratories outside of the animal facility: http://www.mcgill.ca/research/files/research/policy_animals_outside_facility_rev_02_2014_0.pdf 6.2. Office of the Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation) Animal Compliance Office, ALPHA certificate: http://www.mcgill.ca/research/researchers/compliance/animal/alpha
2023.05.08	3.3. Opaque drape or cloth bag to cover the transport enclosure, where applicable 3.5. Personal protective equipment (PPE) such as mask, gloves, laboratory gown 3.6. Bags for dead animal carcass disposal
2023.05.08	5. PROCEDURES CONSIDERATIONS
2023.05.08	5.6.3. Cannot be compressed 5.6.4. Allows for adequate ventilation 5.6.5. Is clearly identified 5.6.6. Can 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) 5.6.7. Can contain all animal excretions and body fluids
2023.05.08	5.19. Transport can be coordinated by the animal facility staff.
2023.05.08	5.10. The use of a dedicated animal courier is recommended for long-distance transportation.
2023.05.08	5.11. When transporting animals by air, adhere to the The International Air Transport Association (IATA) Live Animal Regulations
2023.05.08	5.12.1. Animals must be handled the same way they would be in the animal facility (e.g. appropriate PPE and containment devices). 5.12.2. Species-appropriate PPE must be worn. 5.12.9. Dead Animal carcasses should be returned to the animal facility for disposal are disposed in the designated area.
2023.05.08	6. PROCEDURES FOR RODENTS 6.1. Transfers between the animal facility and procedure areas outside of the animal facility. 5.7. 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 6.1.3. When using caging equipment to transport rodents, lids must be secured to the cage, e.g., using low tack masking tape or painter's tape. Invert or remove the water bottle during transport. 6.1.4. When using a cart to transport cages, a measure needs to be applied to secure cages to the cart to prevent them from tipping over accidentally, e.g., using a strap to secure the cages to the cart or placing the cages in a large bin. Do not stack cages over each other. 6.1.5. All clear Cages must be covered with an opaque cloth or placed in an opaque cloth bag to prevent public viewing of the animals within. Avoid using plastic bags to cover cages. 6.1.6. Food and a source of water, i.e., water bottle, should be provided if animals will remain in the cage or transport container for over 4 hours. 6.1.8. Cages must be promptly returned to the animal facility for processing. Empty cages should be covered from view during transport.

2023.05.08	<p>6.2. Transfer between animal facilities</p> <p>6.2.1. All transfers should be approved by both the sending and receiving facilities.</p> <p>6.2.2. Prior to sending the animals, they should be examined and found to be fit for transport.</p> <p>6.2.3.1. Caging equipment must not be used to transport rodents to facilities outside McGill University. Animal shipping containers can be obtained from the animal facility.</p> <p>6.2.3.2. When using caging equipment to transport rodents, lids must be secured to the cage, e.g., using low tack masking tape or painter's tape. Invert or remove the water bottle during transport.</p> <p>6.2.3.3. Cages can be placed inside an opaque cloth bag to prevent public viewing of the animals within. Avoid using plastic bags.</p>
2023.05.08	<p>7. PROCEDURES FOR SMALL AND LARGE ANIMALS (NON RODENTS)</p> <p>7.1. Transfers between the animal facility and procedure areas outside of the animal facility</p> <p>7.1.2. Other Small animals, such as rabbits, cats, and dogs, should be transported in carriers. Large animals should be transported in dedicated animal transport enclosure or crates.</p> <p>7.1.3. Carriers, enclosures, or crates must be covered with an opaque cloth to prevent public viewing.</p> <p>7.1.4. Carriers, enclosures, or crates should be cleaned between animals</p> <p>7.2. Transfer between animal facilities</p> <p>7.2.1. All transfers should be approved by both the sending and receiving facilities.</p> <p>7.2.2. Prior to sending the animals, they should be examined and found to be fit for transport.</p> <p>7.2.3. For non-human primates (NHPs) Refer to SOP 518 – Transport of NHPs Between Facilities.</p> <p>7.2.4. Other Small animals, such as rabbits, cats, and dogs, should be transported in carriers. Large animals should be transported in animal transport crates.</p> <p>7.2.5. Provision of food and water for large animals should take into consideration the species being transported and the duration of transport. Consult the veterinarian for recommendations.</p> <p>7.2.6. Outdoor transportation by foot is not recommended.</p>
2023.05.08	<p>8.3. Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) guidelines: Mice, 2019.</p> <p>8.4. Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) guidelines: Rats, 2020.</p> <p>8.5. Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) guidelines on: procurement of animals used in science, 2007.</p>