This document has been developed by The Australian National University's (ANU) Research Ethics Office. It has been endorsed by the ANU Animal Ethics Committee (AEC). It is designed to provide guidance regarding current best practice to institutional animal users and carers on the care and use of animals for scientific purposes. It has been prepared in consultation with the Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition 2013.

Document 002: Guidelines for Animal Transport V2.0

Background

Research animals may need to be transported to, from or between facilities on ANU or The Canberra Hospital (TCH) campuses. This has the potential to raise a number of issues relating to Animal Welfare, Biosecurity and Biocontainment.

General Information and Considerations

General Considerations

Welfare: Exposure, stress, maintenance of species specific provisions.
Activism: Targeting by animal activists who do not agree with the use of animals for scientific purposes.
Biological Safety: Containment of animals that are infected with biological agents.
Biosecurity: Compliance with conditions for the transport of animals to or from Approved Arrangements. Transport of animals from an approved arrangement is not permitted unless a specific procedure has approval by the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry relating to the relevant approved arrangement.
Office of the Gene Technology Regulator OGTR: Transport of genetically modified animals to, from or between Physical Containment (PC) facilities is restricted to facilities of the same status.

Prior to Transport

Before transporting animals to or from facilities on campus at ANU or TCH it is expected that the following steps are taken.

1. Contact local area animal services manager or relevant person responsible to determine the pre-transport steps required regarding:
    a. Transport within facility areas
    b. Transport between facilities and or laboratories on ANU or TCH campuses
    c. Domestic/international imports or exports (arrangement of appropriate couriers)
2. Completion of prerequisites required for the handling and use of the animals to be transported. This includes the completion of the online ANZCCART ComPass course, animal handling training and facility inductions;
    a. Where genetically modified animals are to be transported the Gene Technology Practices course and Biological Safety course must be completed

   b. Where animals infected with biological agents are to be transported the Biological Safety course must be completed
3. Ensure the health, temperament, age, sex, number of animals, social relationships, previous experiences and special provisions required for the transport of sick, pregnant or juvenile animals are considered
4. Animals must be assessed for health and identity immediately prior to transport
5. Animals to be transported must only be requested in association with an approved AEC protocol and ANU Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) notifiable low risk dealing, dealings not involving intentional release licence issued by OGTR or exempt dealing approval where applicable

Monitoring, Intervention and Reporting

During Transport

Animals must be transported in accordance with the section 3.2.5 of The Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes.

In a manner appropriate for the species, transport of animals must:

1. Ensure that a source of hydration and food is provided (where appropriate).
   a. Juvenile/pre-weaning animals are not to be held without a nursing mother for periods longer than 30 minutes.
   b. Pregnant animals may require special provisions.
2. Provide a physical and social environment appropriate for the species.
   a. If secondary containment of animals is required for transport, the container should be sturdy and opaque with a properly fitted lid.
   b. Animals requiring secondary containment must only remain in the container for the period of time required to transport them. The period of time and type of containment will be specific to the species.
   c. All species are to be transported in accordance with relevant Biosecurity or OGTR requirements.
3. Minimise harm, pain and distress arising from factors such as containment, movement, noise, disruption of social groups and changes to environment or personnel.
4. Involve appropriate transport arrangements particularly in extremes of weather.
   a. On the Acton campus and at TCH animals may be transported by foot or vehicle. In extreme weather conditions a vehicle must be used.
   b. Use of a bicycle, motorcycle, moped or similar is not permitted.
5. Ensure that animals are supervised and identifiable at all times.
   a. Information relating to the name and contact details of the person responsible for the animals, AEC protocol number, date, number of animals, sex, GMO status (including dealing number where applicable) and number of transport containers (where applicable) must be visible.
6. Where additional conditions relating to physical containment of GM animals or biosecurity requirements apply these must also be adhered to:
   a. Meet ANU Biological Safety requirements.
   b. Meet ANU and OGTR Guidelines for the Transport, Storage and Disposal of GMOs.

After Transport

Animals must be checked for health as soon as possible after arrival at the receiving location. Animals must also be checked against those detailed on cage cards/order forms and ensure that all animals are adequately accounted for.

When moving animals from one facility to another animals should be provided with sufficient time to acclimatise to their new environment prior to starting any experimental work. Acclimatisation periods will vary between species and should be based on considerations such as the distance travelled, immunosuppression or pregnancy. Provision of appropriate periods of acclimatisation also ensures that negative impacts on research are minimised.

Animals that are humanely killed for experimental use immediately after transport do not require acclimatisation periods. It is a requirement that consideration to any impact stress and related physiological changes as a result of transport may have experimental results to ensure usable data is attained.

Where food and/or a source of hydration has been withheld during transport this must be provided immediately upon arrival at the receiving facility.

Minimum Requirements

Reporting

- In the event that animals are found to be unwell or have died during transport, investigators must act in accordance with the Procedure for Managing & Reporting Unexpected Adverse Events.
- Breaches of Biosecurity or unintentional releases of GMOs must be reported in accordance with the relevant legislation and ANU protocols.

Appendix I: Rodent Transport

Rodent Considerations

The following additional considerations apply for the transport of rodents.

1. Rodents are to be transported in a primary sealed container that has the following requirements:
   a. Must be closed to prevent the escape of animals.
   b. Must be labelled with strain, number, sex, individual ID, AEC number and where applicable OGTR and Biosecurity categories.
2. All genetically modified rodents require to be transported in a sealed unbreakable primary and secondary container.
   a. The outermost container labelled to clearly show the name, address and contact details of the sender, so that the sender can be contacted should the container be lost, damaged or misdirected. This is not required where transport takes place entirely within a building
3. Rodents requiring secondary containment cannot be left unattended and may only remain in a sealed container for a maximum of 30 minutes. These must be labelled with appropriate contact and destination information.

4. Transport of rodents between facilities should be by a method that minimises stress to the animals. As such, transport using trolleys should be avoided to minimise noise and vibration.
5. Transport of pregnant rodents:
    a. <14d pregnancy –Can be transported. Sufficient nesting, bedding and food must be provided for the journey.
    b. >14d pregnancy –Due to increased risk of complications at late-stage pregnancy, transport should only be between proximal facilities (i.e on campus) or will require specific ethics approval. Sufficient nesting bedding and food must be provided for the journey.

References and Resources

Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition. 2013

Procedure for Managing & Reporting Unexpected Adverse Events

Guidelines for the Transport, Storage and Disposal of GMOs | Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (ogtr.gov.au)