SOP Title: Transport and Use of Rodents Outside the Animal Facility	**SOP #:** AP608
Effective Date: June 07, 2021	**Revision #:** 01
Veterinary Resources | Program in Comparative Medicine	

1. **PURPOSE**

    1.1. This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) describes how to properly transport rodents from the animal facility to procedural spaces or laboratories. In addition, it describes the procedure to properly sanitize surfaces and equipment in laboratory and procedural spaces that come into contact with rodents. These steps are critical for preventing infections in laboratory animals, and the spread of such infections to other animal in the facility and across campus at The University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB).

2. **RESPONSIBILITY**

    2.1. It is the responsibility of all animal handlers and animal users to follow procedure in accordance with this SOP.

    2.2. It is the responsibility of laboratory staff to properly sanitize all surfaces, equipment, and transport materials.

3. **MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT**

    3.1. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including but not limited to:

        3.1.1. Disposable gloves

        3.1.2. Facility scrubs or disposable gown

        3.1.3. Closed-toed shoes

        3.1.4. Face mask (optional)

    3.2. Disinfectant (i.e. MB-10, mild detergent)

    3.3. Paper towels

    3.4. Transport cart

    3.5. Disposable transport covers

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4. **DEFINITIONS**

    4.1. AUP – Animal Use Protocol

    4.2. IACUC – Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

    4.3. IVC – Individually Ventilated Cage

5. **PROCEDURE**

    5.1. Transporting Rodents to and from Laboratory/Procedural Space Outside the Animal Facility

        5.1.1. Before entering the animal room or laboratory, don appropriate PPE including disposable gloves.

        5.1.2. Place cages on a transport cart. Make sure all cages are placed on a flat, level surface and that cage lids are secured. For conventional cages with no lid, request a wire bar lid and water bottle if needed. Requests should be placed at least 24 hours in advance to cages@som.umaryland.edu.

            5.1.2.1. **Note:** If you need to open an IVC or static microisolator cage before or after transport, prepare the Biosafety Cabinet (BSC) per SOP *EQ113, Biosafety Cabinet Operation and Maintenance*. Open the cage and perform any manipulations within the BSC in an aseptic fashion. **Do not open cages outside the BSC for any reason while in the animal facility.**

        5.1.3. Before exiting the animal room or laboratory, place a disposable transport cover over the cages. Transport covers should cover the cages completely so the animals are not visible.

            5.1.3.1. Take extra disposable transport covers as needed for transport back and forth to the facility.

        Note: Reusable covers (i.e. sheets) are not permitted.

        5.1.4. Remove all PPE before leaving the laboratory or animal room including the gloves. **Do not touch common surfaces with a gloved hand.**

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5.1.5. Transport animals to the designated space. Be careful with bumps and inclines in the facility so as to not tip over cages or stress the animals.

5.1.5.1. Any spills are the responsibility of the spiller.

5.1.6. Once transport is complete, dispose of the disposable transport cover.

5.1.7. Place rodent cages back in their original location within the rack.

5.1.7.1. For conventional cages, place the borrowed wire lids and water bottles in the dirty side of cage wash.

5.1.9. Empty cages are to be placed in the dirty side of cage wash.

5.2. Use and Manipulation of Rodents and Caging in Laboratory Spaces

5.2.1. Before manipulating cages and animals in the lab, don appropriate PPE including disposable gloves and lab coat or disposable gown.

5.2.2. Thoroughly clean the surface and devices to be used for manipulating animals.

5.2.3. Dispose of disposable transport cover.

5.2.4. Whenever possible, use a BSC to manipulate cages and animals per EQ113.

5.2.5. If a BSC is not available in the laboratory or procedure space:

5.2.5.1. When opening rodent cages, place the exterior of the cage lid on the surface. The exterior side of the lid should be in contact with the surface it is resting on, while the interior side of the lid is facing upwards. Do not place any caging accessories from inside the rodent cage on exterior surfaces, only within the interior of the cage lid.

5.2.5.1.1. The interior aspects of the cage are a part of the rodent's microenvironment and are considered 'clean'. All exterior surfaces are considered 'dirty'. It is best practice to avoid mixing these environments whenever possible. Mitigate cross-contamination by

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disinfecting all exterior surfaces, accessories, equipment, etc. and disinfect anything going into the microenvironment (i.e. gloved hands, experimental caging accessories).

5.2.6. Disinfect each surface and piece of equipment that comes in contact with rodents or their caging before and after each use.

5.2.6.1. Appropriate disinfectants include chlorine dioxide-based products or mild detergents for more sensitive equipment. The best way to eliminate pathogens from the environment is to manually scrub all surfaces that come into contact with animals.

5.2.7. For aseptic procedures, follow proper procedures as described in the approved IACUC AUP.

6. REFERENCES

6.1. [EQ113, Biosafety Cabinet Operation and Maintenance](#)

7. FORMS AND APPENDICES – N/A

8. DOCUMENT REVISION HISTORY

Revision Number	Description of Changes	Effective Date
AP608.00	New document.	04/22/2021
AP608.01	Removed line about saturating wheels of carts prior to entering the animal facility due to potential safety hazards.	06/07/2021

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