

## What's the Story or "Narrative" of Your Animal Activities?

Points to highlight when describing activities with live animals to the IACUC inspector or AAALAC site visitor include...

### Animal Transportation

- How are animals transported from point A to point B?
- Things to consider:
  - Are home cages placed inside secondary containment (ex: large Rubbermaid tote or zippered bag)?
  - Is a personal vehicle used? If so, are animals transported inside a climate-controlled portion of the vehicle?
  - What steps are taken to minimize exposure to animal allergens?

### Animal Holding

- How many animals/cages are transported at one time?
- Where are extra cages/animals kept while other animals are undergoing procedures?
- What is the total time that live animals will be kept in this location?
- What happens to dirty caging when the procedure is complete?

### Animal Procedures

- Provide a brief description of the activities conducted in the space.
- For behavior tests mention how apparatus is cleaned/sanitized between animals/trials
- For surgical procedures include:
  - Pre-operative procedures:
    - Where and how is the animal anesthetized? How is depth of anesthesia determined?
    - What analgesic (if any) is administered prior to surgery and by what route?
      - NOTE: If no preemptive analgesic administered ensure this is approved in your AUP
    - How is the animal prepped for surgery?
      - Hair, fur or feather removal? Skin prep including type of surgical scrub used?
      - Is there physical distance between the pre-op area and the surgical area? Or is the separation based on time?
  - Surgical procedures:
    - Include information regarding how instruments are sterilized and confirmation of sterility (e.g.: color change tape, etc.)
    - Describe how sterility is maintained between surgeries (e.g.: separate instrument packs, bead sterilizer, etc.)
    - Provide a brief description of the surgical procedure including monitoring depth of anesthesia, wound closure, and how thermoregulatory support is maintained throughout.
  - Post-operative procedures:
    - What does recovery look like/how are animals recovered?
    - How is thermoregulatory support provided and when is it removed?
    - How long are animals observed prior to returning to the vivarium?
    - What post-operative meds are administered, and for how long?
  - Transportation & Follow-up:
    - How are the animals transported back to the vivarium?
    - What does post-operative care look like for your animals?
  - Records:
    - Both surgical and post-operative records may be requested for review. Ensure your records match the requirements outlined in TAMU-G-013 (rodents), TAMU-G-018 (non-rodent mammals), TAMU-G-035 (fish), or TAMU-G-049 (amphibians/reptiles).
- For other procedures (including euthanasia) – ensure you describe the process from start to finish including where carcasses are stored (if applicable).



### Example narratives

#### **Behavior tests where rodents are returned to the vivarium (inside the same building as the PI lab):**

Animal home cages are placed inside sanitizable Rubbermaid totes and placed on a cart. They are transported via service elevator from the vivarium to the lab. Between 1-2 cages are transported at a time and animals remain in their home cages on the cart during experimental procedures. Animals are removed from their home cage one at a time and placed in the apparatus. **[Insert 1-2 sentence description of the procedure]**. At the end of the procedure the animal is returned to their home cage, the apparatus is cleaned with 70% EtOH, utilizing a CMP validated cleaning SOP, and the next animal is tested. Animals remain in this space for no longer than 2 hours. At the end of all animal trials the animals are transported back to the vivarium and returned to their housing locations the same way they were transported to the procedure space. The apparatus is cleaned as described in our cleaning SOP, again using CMP validated procedures.

#### **Surgical procedures where rodents are returned to the vivarium (inside the same building as the PI lab):**

Animal home cages are placed inside sanitizable Rubbermaid totes and placed on a cart. They are transported via service elevator from the vivarium to the lab. Between 1-2 cages are transported at a time and animals remain in their home cages on the cart while waiting for surgery. The surgical area has been prepped prior to getting the animals and the surfaces are sanitized. Sterile surgical instruments in autoclaved packages with color change indicators and sterile PPE are prepped and ready to go. Animals are removed from their home cage one at a time and anesthetized via **[insert anesthesia method here]**. Once they have reached a surgical plane of anesthesia, verified by **[insert how verified]**, they are prepped for surgery by **[insert surgical prep statement here]**. Additionally, they are administered their pre-operative analgesic **[insert drug/route here]**. The animal is then transferred from the prep site to the surgical location and **[insert 1-2 sentence description of the surgery]**. Because the surgery will take more than 15 minutes, thermoregulatory support is provided via **[insert heat source info]**. At the end of the surgery the animal is placed in a recovery cage which is rested half-on/half off a circulating water pad and observed until the animal has fully recovered. Once all surgeries are completed and animals recovered **[insert description of "recovered"]**, they are placed in their home cage(s) and transported back to the vivarium and returned to their housing locations the same way they were transported to the procedure space. Animals are monitored daily post-operatively for **[list # days]** and these observations and post-op analgesia administration are documented in their surgical (or post-op) records.