

LABORATORY ANIMAL CARE UNIT

University of Tennessee Health Science Center
956 Court Ave, Box 17
Room B106 Coleman Building
Memphis TN, 38163
Phone (901) 448-5656, Fax (901) 448-8506

Import/Export Program

Coordinator: Ernestine Hayes, RLAT
Phone (901) 448-7312, Fax (901) 448-8506
Email ehayes3@utmem.edu

Alternate Contacts: Dr. David Hamilton, Veterinarian – Nash and Cancer Research Building Vivaria
Phone (901) 448-7311 Fax (901) 448-8506 Email dhamilt7@utmem.edu
Dr. Scott Jackson, Veterinarian – Coleman and Molecular Sciences Vivaria
Phone (901) 448-7314 Fax (901) 448-8506 Email jjacks23@utmem.edu

Purpose:

To outline the procedures and requirements for the importation of rodents to the UTHSC vivaria and the exportation of rodents from UTHSC to other institutions.

Animal Import

With regards to the importation of rodents to any area of the UTHSC campus, sources of animals fall into one of three general categories:

- 1) **Approved supplier – Commercial vendor.** This is an animal vendor such as Jax and Charles River Laboratories, from which we can import animals and place them directly into one of our housing areas upon arrival. These vendors have intensive breeding and health surveillance programs and provide high quality research rodents. Animals from these vendors are considered free of rodent pathogens
- 2) **Approved supplier – Non-commercial vendor.** This category includes all animals that originate from other research institutions (e.g. from one investigator to another). This category also includes mice that originate from organizations such as the MMRRC and MMHHC. Even though health information is required prior to shipment, these animals are not considered “free” from rodent pathogens and must go through an 8-week quarantine period before being housed in a UTHSC vivarium.
- 3) **Non-approved supplier.** This is an animal source from which we **will not** accept animals under any condition. This is usually due to the health status of the animals.

Animal Import Procedures

****Prior to the import of any animals, you must have an approved ACUC protocol which states your preferred housing location****

****Housing of rodents in a laboratory for > 24 hours requires special IACUC approval and laboratory inspection****

*****Many genetically modified animals are considered intellectual property and require a Materials Transfer Agreement (MTA). If receipt of these animals requires an MTA, that must be routed to Research Administration for signature*****

1) Animals from an approved commercial vendor:

To order and import rodents from an approved commercial vendor (eg. Jax or CRL), simply submit an online animal requisition at:

http://www.utmem.edu/research/research_resources/LACU/procurement.php

If you have an approved ACUC protocol, the LACU administrative services assistant (Andrea Briggs) will order the animals and the animal number will be subtracted from your approved ACUC protocol. You will be notified when your animals arrive and they will be housed in the room outlined in your ACUC protocol.

2) Animals from a non-commercial vendor:

The LACU routinely assists investigators in the importation of animals from other research institutions. Prior to importation, all requests undergo a careful evaluation of current health monitoring reports and housing conditions from the facility of origin and we conduct a risk assessment analysis based on currently accepted veterinary practices for infectious diseases. Following import, rodents will undergo a quarantine period that consists of housing and care under strict biosecure quarantine conditions by trained technicians. Sentinel animals placed in the same quarantine cubicle as the imported animals will undergo comprehensive health surveillance using traditional and advanced diagnostic testing.

It is important for the investigator to plan ahead as there are numerous steps that have to be completed by both the sending and receiving institutions. As well, space in the quarantine facility in the Coleman building is limited and requests are processed in an “as received” basis. It can take several weeks to several months from the time of initial request until the animals are shipped, to fulfill the requirements of the sending institution and arrange shipment. Questions regarding intellectual property rights and material transfer agreements (MTA) should be referred to the UTHSC Office of Research.

There may be airline travel restrictions due to extremes in weather. Most airlines will not accept animals for travel if the ambient temperatures at the shipping and receiving airports are outside their shipping guidelines (usually <32°F or >80°F). This occurs practically every summer in Memphis and these restrictions may delay receipt of animals.

Steps for importing rodents:

1. The investigator must submit a completed Animal Requisition Form (http://www.utmem.edu/research/research_resources/LACU/procurement.php) to the LACU office.
 - a. The form should include the name and contact information for the sending investigator and clearly describe any special husbandry and care instructions that are unique for the strain/stock requested.
 - b. If animals are to be used acutely (e.g. euthanized upon arrival), this should also be indicated on the form.
 - c. Preferred Housing Building should be marked as: **Coleman Quarantine**
2. The investigator should also send an e-mail to the shipping coordinator, Ernestine Hayes (ehayes3@utmem.edu), describing the planned shipment, intended use of the animals, numbers of animals needed, and housing preference following quarantine. With this information, the shipping coordinator will contact the veterinarian at the sending institution to request health surveillance information from the colony of origin. The health surveillance testing must be current and thorough, or additional testing might be required prior to shipping. Some shipments may be refused, due to presence of infectious disease within the colony of origin. Rederivation by an outside company is an option with these animals.

3. Animals are to be shipped to:

Mr. Brad Stevens
Room B106 Coleman Building UTHSC
956 Court Ave.
Memphis, TN
38163

Quarantine Procedures for Rodents

All imported rodents (except from approved commercial vendors), which will be housed in LACU animal facilities usually undergo a standard 8-week quarantine period, prior to release to the investigator. The length of the quarantine period may vary, depending on risk assessment and interim testing results. Availability of quarantine space is limited due to small size of the facility. Requests for quarantine should be made in writing/email and be accompanied by a completed animal requisition.

1. Healthy rodents approved for shipping will be received and housed in the quarantine area at the Coleman building. Quarantine is usually a minimum of 8 weeks following receipt.
2. All mice will be treated prophylactically for pinworms with Fenbendazole impregnated feed (Harlan Teklad 2018S), and for fur mites with Mite Arrest, a 7% pyrethrin compound applied to nesting material and placed in the box. If an investigator does not want the animals treated with Mite Arrest, then an alternative is to co-house the sentinels with the imported mice to allow direct cage contact.
3. A pair of sentinel mice will be placed within the isolation cubicle, and receive dirty bedding from the imported cages for a period of at least 8 weeks. At the end of this time, the sentinels will be euthanized and undergo parasitologic testing and gross necropsy evaluation. Blood will be collected and the sera will be submitted to an outside laboratory for serologic testing against a panel of infectious agents. Additional testing of the imported animals may occur, on an as needed basis.
4. Imported rodents will remain in quarantine until negative health monitoring results are received.
5. If sentinel animals show positive test results during the quarantine period, the imported mice will remain in quarantine. Each case will be individually evaluated to determine the most appropriate course of containment and elimination of the pathogen(s).
6. Investigators may not work with their animals while they are in quarantine. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis.
7. Breeding of animals in quarantine is acceptable and technical assistance is available.

Quarantine Costs

Effective September 18, 2008, the following charges will apply to all shipment of rodents imported into UTHSC:

Quarantine Service Charge:	\$400.00
<i>Includes facility charge, risk assessment, animal order fee, veterinary time, cost of sentinel animals, and routine diagnostic testing of the sentinel animals (necropsy, parasitology and serology)</i>	
Shipping Costs:	Varies, based on site of origin
Technical Services: Matings, weaning, colony management, tail snips, etc.	\$37.50 per hour
Additional Diagnostic Testing:	Cost + 30%
Per Diem (per cage):	\$1.52 per day (mouse) \$2.02 per day (rat)

Animal Export

The LACU routinely assists investigators in the exportation of animals to other research institutions. The process is similar to imports, but reversed. For exports, LACU will send the health information for your animals to the receiving institution's veterinarian, who will review the information before allowing importation to their facility.

Procedures:

- 1) To begin the export process, first notify Ernestine Hayes (ehayes3@utmem.edu) of your plans to ship, and provide her with the location in which the animals are currently housed. Give plenty of notice as the entire approval procedure can take many weeks. This is particularly true for international shipments for which there is abundant paperwork to complete. **Our preferred ship-out day is Tuesday.** This allows enough time to ensure that animals arrive at their destination before the following weekend.
- 2) Provide the address to which the animals will be shipped and a contact person (usually the veterinarian) at the receiving institution. Also inform LACU of who will pay the shipping expenses. If the receiving institution is paying, then LACU needs their account number with one of the animal couriers (Air Net, Bax Global, World Courier). If you are paying the fee, then LACU can use one of their accounts and bill the fee to your LACU account. Please let LACU know which account number you want charged.
- 3) LACU will then contact the receiving institution's veterinarian and send the latest health information for your animals. Once LACU receives approval to ship, a mutually agreeable date will be set. Prior to shipment (usually the day before) you must clearly identify/label the boxes containing the animals you want shipped. LACU staff will box the animals into approved rodent shipping containers and provide the animals with adequate food and water. Boxes will be securely closed and labeled to identify the animals located in each section of the shipping container. The LACU will also arrange a pickup time with the shipping company and complete any necessary paperwork. An email is sent out to you and the receiving institution once the animals are picked up.

Export Costs

The cost for exporting animals to other institutions varies, usually depending on the number of animals being shipped and the required preparation time. Below are the fees that are incorporated into exports:

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| 1) technician time
(boxing of animals, communicating with receiving institution, etc) | \$37.50/hr |
| 2) shipping crates
(each crate can contain up to 4 compartments with up to 5 mice per compartment) | \$30.00 each |
| 3) shipping crate dividers | \$4.00 each |
| 4) gel food
(gel food supplies both nutrition and water and is placed in each compartment) | \$1.25/package |
| 5) courier fees | varies with the number of crates
and the destination |

If you have any further questions please contact one of the people listed above for more information.