

NU – IACUC

POLICY

Northeastern University Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

Stabilization

Transportation of research animals frequently involves temporary deprivation of food and water, overcrowding, exposure to a wider range of environmental variables (including temperature and humidity) than usual, and disruption of the light-dark cycle. These aspects of the shipping process can lead to behavioral and physiological variations which can alter experimental results or interfere with the ability of the animals to recover following experimental interventions. Stabilization prevents compounding of transportation stress with stress induced by the experimental procedures, and thus is important to ensure animal welfare.

Stabilization: *allowing animals time to recover from shipment prior to use in experimental protocols.*

The NIH Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals indicates "...animals should be quarantined and stabilized according to procedures appropriate for the species and circumstances". Additionally, "...all newly received animals should be allowed a stabilization period prior to their use. This permits animals to adapt to their surroundings, resulting in a more stable physiological and behavioral state."

Guidelines:

No Stabilization Required.

Acute Procedures – studies in which the animal is euthanized without recovering from anesthesia or is simply euthanized (i.e.: tissue collection), and it is believed that the stress of shipment will not affect scientific results.

Minor procedures not requiring anesthesia – physical examinations, collection of bodily fluids (excretions or secretions), blood sampling, injections, etc. and, it is believed that the stress of shipment will not affect scientific results.

Forty-eight (48) Hour Stabilization Required.

For all procedures including minor procedures requiring anesthesia and major survival surgical procedures. Justification can be provided to waive the stabilization period.

Stabilization is not required following transport of animals between floors or from animal room to procedure area. The short transit time involved is not expected to create the side effects previously discussed.

The Principal Investigator must justify that transportation stress is not likely to influence the outcome of a study before using unstabilized animals. Even when stabilization is not required by this policy, it should be given serious consideration for scientific purposes.

Should surgery be required upon or shortly after admission, the Principal Investigator **must**:

- Provide justification, in writing, for NU-IACUC approval;
- Draw blood for CBC, and determine hydration status and body temperature. All results must be within normal limits. These findings must be documented and attached to the post-operative form.

The consulting veterinarian may require that the stabilization period be increased for reasons of health and/or animal welfare.

Approved: