



TITLE: External Rodent Imports

SOP Category: Import/Export

RUAC SOP #: 8.02

Page: 1 of 3

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Approval:

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SCOPE: This document describes the procedures to be followed when importing animals. This SOP applies to all Shipping Coordinator (SC), Animal Care Staff (ACS), ACS Supervisors (ACSS), Veterinarian Staff (VS), and Research Staff members (RS) at the Rutgers University facilities.

OBJECTIVE: The objective is to describe the procedures to be taken when a Principal Investigator (PI) or their designee requests rodents to be imported from non-approved sources.

DEFINITIONS:

GESR: Genome Editing Shared Resources

High-risk import: imports that originate from an external institution that has historically tested positive for excluded pathogen(s) within the last 3 years.

PCR: Polymerase Chain Reaction

SV: Shipping Veterinarian

PROCEDURES:

PI Responsibility: The PI requesting to import animals must:

- Submit an Animal Import Request in the iLab Operations Software. This service can be requested through the Rutgers iLab webpage:
<https://rutgers.ilab.agilent.com/landing/196>
- Ensure that the requested strains are listed on the import request as it is documented on their IACUC-approved protocol.
- If an MTA is required, the PI must provide confirmation of completion prior to import : <https://research.rutgers.edu/researcher-support>

Shipping Coordinator Responsibility:

- Review the iLab submission for completeness and check PI's protocol for strain verification.
- Submit estimated charges associated with the import, including supply charges, technical time, and third-party services through iLab for approval.
- Once estimated charges are approved by the PI, SC will change the status of the request to processing, then contact the sending institution to obtain:
 - Facility and health monitoring program descriptions
 - A minimum of 12 months of health reports for the specific source room and cumulative overview of the facility, consisting of:

TITLE: External Rodent Imports

SOP #: 8.02

Page 2 of 3

- Exhaust Air Debris or Pathogen Binder box PCR
- Or Serology and Parasitology PCR
- 3-year facility outbreak history
- SC will review and upload all documents to iLab archived folder.
- The documents are then submitted and reviewed by the Shipping Veterinarian for approval.
- For Germ-free import requests, contact the sending institution to obtain:
 - Facility and health monitoring program description of gnotobiotic facility
 - Details on how animals will be shipped
 - Health reports within ≤ 1 month of import request date. Samples must be collected from the originating isolator or IVC cage including:
 - Microbiology (bacterial and fungal cultures) and PCR
 - OR comparable comprehensive germ-free panel (i.e. Idexx – complete germ-free profile, Charles River - surveillance plus PRIA)
 - For recently re-derived animals or facilities with recent contamination events from originating room, Rutgers may request additional testing such as parasitology, viral screening, and microbiology such as direct testing of the animals being shipped
 - Recent contamination is defined as occurring within 6 months
 - 3 year-gnotobiotic facility contamination history

Post-Review

- The SV may require additional testing by the sending institution if health reports do not meet the facility health requirements (See SOP 8.03 Rodent Quarantine for list of excluded pathogens).
- SC will coordinate required Pre- Importation testing and confirm which institutional PI will be responsible for additional costs.
- If results return negative, shipment may be approved to proceed with import. If results return positive, see options for high-risk imports.

Post-Approval

- Once approved to import by the SV, determination of a quarantine housing location is made and a letter of approval to ship is sent to exporting institution which includes:
 - Animal information (strain, number of animals, DOB, etc.)
 - Dates to receive
 - Delivery address and contact number
 - Courier account number, if applicable
 - Specific shipping instructions; Imports should be coordinated during days when temperatures do not exceed 38F-85F for the entirety of the transport in both locations.

TITLE: External Rodent Imports

SOP #: 8.02

Page 3 of 3

- Once an import is scheduled, notify the appropriate VS and ACSS of pending arrival and forward import information to ACFC administrator.
- SC will also notify all VS and ACSS staff of all incoming shipments for the following week.
- Upon arrival, animals will be unpacked into quarantine at the end of the day. (See Receiving and Unpacking SOP)
- Animals may provide up to 72hr of acclimation time in quarantine room prior to direct sample collection. (see #8.03 Rodent Quarantine Program). Sample collection may be completed by the Shipping Coordinator or VS and submitted for a Rutgers Quarantine PCR panel through Charles River Laboratories.
- Quarantine testing results report is reviewed by the SV. Where results are NEGATIVE the SV will send a release from Quarantine approval notification to the SC. SC then sends email notification to the PI with instructions on how to submit an internal transfer via ACFC system and proceed to Add Transfers card each cage (See # 8.04 Internal Animal transfer).
- ACSS will coordinate the transfer animals to the final housing location and notify the PI.
- If results return positive for excluded pathogens, SV will communicate directly to PI and develop and organize an action plan with the SV or Designee. (See SOP #7.13 Infectious Disease Outbreak). Preferred and recommended action plan is for rederivation services coordinated and performed by the GESR
- Final housing destinations may change based on results from Quarantine testing.

Shipping Veterinarian Responsibility:

- Review health reports, program descriptions, and completed import forms and determine approval status.
- Determine quarantine location, testing panel, and/or if additional testing should be performed.

High-risk Rodent Imports: The following procedures will be conducted depending on the positive pathogen, timeline of the positive pathogen, and the requested final housing location

- Alternate final housing location
- Extended quarantine with prophylactic treatment as appropriate (see SOP #8.03 Rodent Quarantine Program)
- Importation of cryopreserved material for resuscitation
- Importations for immediate rederivation of live animals by GESR

REFERENCES: SOPs on Rodent Quarantine Program, Infectious Disease Outbreak, Receiving and Unpacking