



CM SOP #406 – Receiving Rodents from Approved Outside Vendors

Original release date: 08/01/2024 Version: 6 Date last revised: 03/26/2026

I. Purpose & Scope

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to establish standardized procedures for the receipt, inspection, unpacking, and placement of rodents delivered from approved vendors into Comparative Medicine (CM) vivaria.

These procedures are intended to:

- Protect the health status of established rodent colonies
- Ensure proper documentation and communication of animal arrivals
- Maintain biosecurity and sanitation standards
- Ensure safe and humane handling of animals upon receipt

This SOP applies to all Comparative Medicine personnel involved in receiving rodents from approved commercial vendors into all CM-managed vivaria.

II. Roles & Responsibilities

Comparative Medicine Staff

- Adhering to procedures outlined in this SOP
- Preparing caging and housing areas prior to delivery
- Inspecting animals upon arrival
- Ensuring animals are properly housed and monitored
- Documenting all required information on per diem sheets and health logs
- Reporting discrepancies, injuries, illness, or mortality immediately

ACTs must:

- Inform the Facility Manager and Assistant Director for Administration and Training immediately about delivery discrepancies
- Inform the Veterinarian and Facility Manager immediately upon discovery of injury or illness

Research Staff, Students, Visitors

- Ensuring animal orders are accurate and approved
- Providing protocol information and special husbandry instructions
- Responding promptly to notifications regarding delivery discrepancies or extra animals

Note: Research personnel are not permitted to directly receive animals without prior authorization and training.

CM Management

- Ensuring procedures are followed as outlined in this SOP
- Ensuring staff training and competency
- Coordinating delivery logistics and housing readiness
- Communicating with vendors regarding delivery issues



- Finalizing animal order documentation in VSATS
- Placing animal orders on behalf of researchers when required
- Providing delivery information to FM and ACT for planning purposes
- Notifying vendors immediately of delivery problems or animal health concerns

CM Director and AV

- Reviewing vendor health reports and exclusion list compliance
- Providing veterinary oversight of animal receipt and housing
- Determining appropriate response to animal illness, injury, or mortality
- Ensuring compliance with institutional animal health and biosecurity standards
- The Attending Veterinarian has final authority regarding acceptance, treatment, or disposition of animals.

III. General Notes & Definitions

- **Approved Vendor:** commercial supplier whose health monitoring program has been reviewed and accepted by CM veterinarians.
- **Approved Vendor Room:** A designated housing room assigned to receive animals from a specific vendor based on health status compatibility.
- **Veterinary Services Animal Tracking System used to (VSATS):**
 - Track animal orders
 - Document delivery information
 - Notify research personnel of animal arrival
- Animals from approved vendors must be handled in a manner that:
 - Prevents cross-contamination
 - Maintains established colony health status
 - Ensures proper sanitation and workflow separation

IV. Materials & Equipment

- Disinfectant solution approved for vivarium use
- Cage changing station (CCS)
- Clean cages and cage cards
- Personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Autowater system or water bottles
- Transport carts
- Garbage bags for disposal
- Per diem sheets
- Health monitoring logs
- VSATS system

V. Procedure

Prior to Delivery

- A. Rodents are typically delivered:
 1. Tuesdays or Wednesdays
 2. Before 10:00 AM
 3. Unless holidays or shipping disruptions occur
- B. The VT will provide delivery information at least 48 hours prior to delivery whenever possible.



C. Information provided includes:

1. VSATS ID
2. Protocol number
3. Delivery date
4. Vendor
5. Approved vendor room
6. Number of cages
7. Building and room
8. Principal Investigator name
9. Species
10. Strain
11. Number of animals
12. Age
13. Sex
14. Special husbandry information

D. Prepare appropriate caging prior to delivery.

Delivery

Upon arrival the delivery driver will contact the ACT or Facility Manager.

A. The ACT or FM will:

1. Bring transport cart and disinfectant outside to meet the delivery vehicle
2. Spray the cart with disinfectant prior to loading
3. Inspect shipping container for:
 - a) Damage
 - b) Contamination
 - c) Correct delivery label
4. Spray all exterior surfaces of shipping container with disinfectant
5. Sign and retain packing slip as required

B. Transport to the dirty hallway of the vivarium.

C. Allow appropriate contact time before opening shipping containers

Unpacking

A. Before opening containers, ACT must:

1. Confirm the approved vendor room matches the table provided by the Veterinary Technician
2. Contact the Veterinary Technician if the room assignment does not match

B. Cage Changing Station Preparation

1. Don gloves
2. Turn on cage changing station
3. Disinfect work surface according to *CMSOP 400: Cage Changing Rodents*
4. Allow disinfectant contact time before use

C. Container Handling Rules:

1. Never open more than one shipping container at a time
2. Do not mix animals from separate shipping containers
3. Disinfect CCS and change gloves between containers when multiple shipments are received

D. Animal Inspection

1. Carefully examine animals for:
 - a) Lethargy
 - b) Trauma
 - c) Illness



- d) Mortality
2. Contact CM Management or the AV immediately if illness or death is observed.

Housing

- A. House animals up to:
 1. Five mice per cage
 2. Two rats per cage
 3. Unless otherwise instructed by Comparative Medicine staff.
- B. Place multiple cards on the cage for potential future separation.
- C. Animals showing signs of illness must:
 1. Be handled last
 2. Be housed separately
 3. Have cages clearly identified
- D. All cages from the same shipping container must be marked accordingly.

Water and Food Verification

- A. Before placing cage on rack, verify:
 1. Food is present
 2. Water source is functional
 - a) Autowater system valves must be:
 - (i) Tugged
 - (ii) Toggled
 - b) Water bottles must be:
 - (i) Inverted and shaken
 - (ii) Verified to dispense water
 3. Animals are freely moving
- B. Place animals:
 1. On appropriate shelf or IVC rack
 2. In designated approved vendor room

Disposal of Shipping Containers

- A. Cardboard containers:
 - a) Place directly into garbage bag
 - b) Dispose as regular waste
- B. Reusable plastic containers:
 - a) Remove all stickers
 - b) Transport to dirty cage wash
 - c) Dump bedding
 - d) Wash according to cage wash procedures

Communication

- A. Send an email to the ADAT by noon whenever possible
- B. Include:
 1. Confirmation of delivery
 2. Animal health condition
 3. Rack location of cages
 4. Any discrepancies
- C. Discrepancies
 1. Report immediately if:
 - a) Incorrect number of animals
 - b) Wrong strain
 - c) Incorrect sex



- d) Injured animals
- e) Dead animals
2. If extra animals are delivered FM will Contact research personnel to determine disposition.

Documentation

- A. Record number of cages added on the appropriate protocol per diem sheet
- B. Document vendor and number of animals in comments section
- C. Record health concerns according to *CMSOP 202: Rodent Health Monitoring and Reporting*
- D. VSATS Documentation (ADAT)
 1. Complete Section 2 of the animal order in VSATS
 2. Notify research personnel of animal arrival
- E. Notify vendor immediately if any animals are:
 1. Dead
 2. Ill
 3. Injured

Recordkeeping

- A. The following records must be maintained:
 1. Per diem sheets
 2. Health logs
 3. Delivery documentation
 4. Packing slips
 5. VSATS records
 6. Vendor communication records
- B. Records must be available for inspection.

VI. Health & Safety

- Personnel handling rodents may be exposed to:
 - Animal allergens
 - Bites or scratches
 - Biological contaminants
- To reduce risk, personnel must:
 - Wear appropriate PPE
 - Follow universal precautions
 - Wash hands after handling animals
- In the event of a bite or scratch, personnel must:
 - Notify supervisor immediately
 - Seek medical evaluation
 - Complete injury report

VII. References & Attachments

- *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*
- Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals
- CMSOP 202: Rodent Health Monitoring and Reporting
- CMSOP 400: Cage Changing Station Use
- Approved Vendor List
- Per Diem Sheet Template
- VSATS Animal Order Record



VIII. Revision History

Revision Date	Revision Number	Summary of Changes
08/02/2016	2	Addition of delivery time of animals. Added information provided to technicians about the arrival, added phone numbers to notification from delivery driver, added cardboard vs. reusable shipping containers
06/22/2017	3	Assuring food and Water is provided after placing in clean cages.
05/15/2021	4	Cleaned up language
04/03/2024	5	Removed language regarding saving and filing packing slip health reports since available online.
03/26/2026	6	Updated format, made ADA compliant, refined and streamlined language

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