



Procedure Advisory

Expert advice on operating procedures for animal research.

#1.09: Techniques for transporting animals between housing and procedure areas.

This Procedure Advisory has been created to assist you in developing and updating your Standard Operating Procedures for the **safe, effective and humane transport of animals from housing to procedure and testing areas**. In particular, these procedures are designed for feline, canine, primates and other species for which a collar and lead pole are commonly used to ensure safe and humane handling.

This advisory offers techniques for two different scenarios:

- A. Cooperative animal subjects.
- B. Uncooperative or unfamiliar animal subjects.

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i. Cooperative and familiar animal subjects.

This procedure is especially effective with research subjects that either are, or can be trained quickly, to become cooperative. This approach uses positive reinforcement, such as food, to reward desired behaviors.

1. Train the animal to come to the front of the cage, near the door, and sit. Repeated spoken invitations with a visible reward (e.g., a food treat) should be enough.
2. If the animal is not wearing a collar open the door, just a bit, to safely access the animal. While holding the animal securely with one hand—or, if necessary, with both hands—either attach a collar or have a co-worker attach the collar as you hold the animal. Crist Instruments' newly redesigned *DuraCollar™*, features a capture ring that is designed for easier capture with any pole device.
3. If the animal was wearing a collar prior to the door being opened, and once the animal is sitting by the door, open the door just a bit to insert a pole device into the cage.
4. If the animal is wearing a collar use a *SafeWrangler™ Animal Guide*, or other pole device, and attach the capture hook to the collar's ring. While any pole device can work, Crist Instruments' *SafeWrangler™ Animal Guide* is equipped with an ergonomic grip and trigger combination that provides a greater degree of control in small operating spaces.
5. Once the animal has been secured to the pole device, continue the positive reinforcement with a reward (such as a food item or toy).
6. Complete the processing of opening the door, encourage the animal to exit and walk to the animal to the desired device or process area.
7. Once at the desired site, the animal can be rewarded again.
8. If appropriate, position the testing platform, such as a primate chair, next to the scale to encourage the subject to move themselves into the chair.
9. With the desired positioning accomplished, another positive reinforcement (such as a grape or expression of praise) can be offered to the subject for complying with the procedure.

[END]

i. Uncooperative or unfamiliar animal subjects.

Prior to approaching the animal it is advisable to don a pair of gloves to minimize contact with animal fluids, hair, fur, dander and any other potentially infectious or allergenic material. Depending upon the material and thickness of the gloves, they will also offer varying degrees of barrier protection against scratches, tears and punctures that may be caused by contact with the animal (e.g., their claws and teeth), their housing, transfer equipment or research devices.

Depending upon the facility and research protocols, it may also be advisable to discuss the use of a mild sedative to relax the animal before handling. Primate cages are often equipped with Squeeze Bar handles to coax the animal to the front of the cage. Consider incorporating the use of the Squeeze Bar to position the subject where it can more easily be sedated, poled or other procedures that may need to be administered.

The following Double-Pole technique developed at NIH remains the standard procedure to this day. It works well when the subject is very large, aggressive, has not been trained or is unduly upset.

1. If the animal **is** wearing a collar prior to the door being opened, place a pole into the cage through the cage bars without opening the door. Crist Instruments' newly redesigned *DuraCollar™*, features a capture ring that is designed for easier capture with any pole device.
2. If the animal is not wearing a collar, open the door just a bit and safely access the animal. While holding the animal in the cage securely with one hand—or, if necessary, with both hands—either attach a collar or have a co-worker attach the collar as you hold the animal. **Attach the pole device to the ring attached to the animal's collar.** While any pole device can work, Crist Instruments' *SafeWrangler™ Animal Guide* is equipped with an ergonomic grip and trigger combination that provides a greater degree of control in small operating spaces.
3. Once the animal is attached to the pole, the door can be opened slightly (less than half-way) to attach the second pole to the collar.
4. Before opening the cage door more than half-way, remove the first pole (which is now extending through the cage bars). If the animal is very large, or there is concern for unpredictable behavior, the second pole should be reattached for an extra degree of control.
5. Once the animal has been secured to the pole device(s), offer a positive reinforcement with a food, or toy, reward.

6. Complete the processing of opening the door, encourage the animal to exit and walk to the animal to the desired device or process area.
7. Once at the desired site, the animal can be rewarded again.
8. If appropriate, position the testing platform, such as a primate chair, next to the scale to encourage the subject to move themselves into the chair.
9. With the desired positioning accomplished, another positive reinforcement (such as a grape or expression of praise) can be offered to the subject for complying with the procedure. [END]

