



## CARE309.02 Maintenance of Decapitation Equipment

The intent of this standard operating procedure (SOP) is to ensure that decapitation equipment is well maintained and used properly. This SOP is intended for use by all personnel who use decapitation equipment. This procedure is approved by the Cornell Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and the Cornell Center for Animal Resources and Education (CARE). Any exemption must be approved by the IACUC prior to its application.

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### 1. Introduction

It is important that all decapitation equipment be maintained properly to provide swift and effective euthanasia and prevent injury to the operator

### 2. Materials

- Decapitation equipment marked with a number or other identification:
  - guillotine
  - dedicated scissors
- Disinfectant
- Alcohol
- Silicon lubricant
- Log book
- Blade sharpness test material (e.g. ¼" felt, Sharn Inc. Scissor Sharpness Test Material, or similar product).

### 3. Procedures

- a. Prior to Use:
  - i. Personnel using decapitation equipment must be properly trained and proficient in its use.
  - ii. Check the blades for rust, smoothness, and cleanliness.

- iii.. Report any problems to the proper person before using.
- b. Maintain a log book in close proximity to the equipment which includes the following information:
  - i. Identification number of the equipment.
  - ii. Room location
  - iii. .Person responsible for maintenance and repair
  - iv. A column tracking usage (i.e., date, species, number of animals euthanized, person's initials using the equipment)
  - v.. A column tracking date of blade sanitization and sharpening (to be done at a minimum, annually)
- c. Use and maintenance of guillotines
  - i. It is preferable not to move guillotines from room to room. If you must transfer a guillotine to a different animal facility room or lab, sanitize the guillotine before moving to another location and disinfect before replacing it in the original room.
  - ii. Clean after each use:
    - Rinse the entire guillotine under fast-running cold water to remove any blood and tissues.
    - Scrub the base with disinfectant to reduce gross contamination.
    - Rinse a final time with alcohol to ensure evaporation and reduce the need to hand-dry the equipment.
    - Turn the guillotine upside down with the blades opened to facilitate drying.
  - iii. Ensure that guillotines are lubricated as needed with silicon.
  - iv. Ensure blades are sharp by testing on a cadaver of appropriate species and size.
  - v. Ensure that guillotines are sharpened at a minimum of every 12 months or more often as needed. Depending on species involved and frequency of use, the blades may need to be sharpened every 6 months.
  - vi.. Every 12 months, or more often as needed, take the guillotine apart:
    - Note:** only trained personnel should do this.
      - Run the blades through the tunnel washer in a basket.(contact facility staff for this service)
      - Test for sharpness with test material. Replace or sharpen the guillotine blade if it fails to effectively cut through the test material..
    - Note:** frequency of sharpening depends on both frequency of use and the species euthanized. If the action of the blade is not smooth and precise, err on the side of caution.
- d. Use and maintenance of dedicated scissors
  - i. Rinse the scissors under fast-running cold water to remove any blood and tissues.
  - ii.. Scrub with disinfectant to reduce gross contamination.
  - iii. Rinse a final time with alcohol to ensure evaporation and reduce the need to hand-dry the equipment.
  - iv. Ensure the blades are sharp by testing with blade sharpness material.
  - v. Replace scissors or sharpen scissors if they fail to effectively cut through

the test material, become rusted, or become damaged.

#### 4. Safety

- a. Do not use decapitation equipment unless properly trained.
- b. Old guillotine blades should be disposed of in a sharps container.

#### 5. Contingencies

Contact PI, CARE or Facility Manager if there is a question on the use or maintenance of the guillotine.

#### 6. References

- *AVMA Guidelines on Euthanasia (Formerly Report of the AVMA Panel on Euthanasia)*. June 2007. <http://www.avma.org/resources/euthanasia.pdf>
- CARE SOP 711 *Sharps Precautions*  
<http://www.research.cornell.edu/care/documents/SOPs/CARE711.pdf>

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Written by/date:  
Carol Barriere

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Debbie Alo

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