

Best Practices for Maintenance of Guillotines used for Euthanasia Decapitation

The Principal Investigator must ensure that all personnel using the guillotine are properly trained and proficient in its use.

It is required that all animals be sedated or anesthetized before decapitation unless precluded by scientific considerations and specifically justified to, and approved by, the IACUC.

Guillotines must be kept clean and sharp. Operator should ensure that the action is smooth with no perceptible binding or resistance. The blade must be rust-free, sharp, and decapitate with minimal force. Guillotines must be lubricated as needed with silicon.

Guillotines should be sharpened a minimum of every 12 months or more often as needed.

A log book should be maintained and available to inspectors.

The use of plastic cones, such as Decapicones™, for animal restraint is recommended to provide good restraint, minimize distress, improve positioning, and enhance operator safety.

The time that animals are kept in the same room as the guillotine should be minimized.

Suggested daily maintenance for the guillotine:

- rinse the entire guillotine under fast-running cold water to remove any blood and tissues,
- scrub the base with disinfectant to reduce gross contamination,
- perform final rinse 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.

NOTE: use of scissors, knives, scalpels or cutting devices other than a guillotine to perform decapitation is not permitted without justification to, and approval by, the IACUC. The exception to this rule is when euthanizing rodent neonates in which the above devices are considered acceptable