

**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**  
**DIVISION OF COMPARATIVE MEDICINE**  
**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA**

SOP#: 1165.2

Date Issued: New

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<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Maintenance and Use of Rodent Decapitation Equipment</b>
<b>SCOPE:</b>	Animal Care Personnel
<b>RESPONSIBILITY:</b>	Facility Manager, Animal Care, and Research Personnel
<b>PURPOSE:</b>	To Outline the Proper Procedures for Using and Maintaining Decapitation Equipment

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**I. PURPOSE**

1. To establish appropriate procedures for the use and maintenance of rodent decapitation equipment when used without the benefit of rodent anesthesia.

**II. RESPONSIBILITY**

1. The Veterinarians oversee all aspects of animal health, and are assisted by all program staff.
2. Facility Managers ensure implementation of all procedures.
3. Research personnel are required to follow these guidelines.

**III. PROCEDURES**

1. Materials:
  - a. Guillotine and or dedicated sharp scissors
  - b. Oxivir Tb
  - c. Alcohol Wipes
  - d. Silicone Lubricant
  - e. DecapiCones®
2. Prior to use
  - a. **Dedicated guillotine or sharp scissors** must be used for rodent decapitation without the benefit of anesthesia, in accordance with **IACUC Principle XX.5**, and must be inspected before and during each use to ensure it is clean, rust-free, sharp, and operates without resistance.
  - b. Researchers are responsible for first securing **IACUC approval** of rodent decapitation without benefit of anesthesia as a physical method of rodent euthanasia, for documenting Comparative Medicine **training** and **proficiency** in rodent decapitation without benefit of anesthesia using **CMDC 222**, and for ensuring dedicated equipment is always in good condition prior to each use. Part of Comparative Medicine training documented by CMDC 222 includes instructions that **if equipment becomes less than optimal**, becomes rusty, less than sharp, or operates with some resistance, it must be **replaced**. Training also includes the requirement that sign SC #272 which reads "SOP 1165 requires functional testing prior to use" must be attached to the dedicated guillotine or sharp scissors.
  - c. Equipment that is not clean, rust-free, sharp, and operates without resistance must be replaced before using.
  - d. If using DecapiCones®, ensure that a sufficient amount is available.

3. Use and Maintenance of Guillotines and Scissors
  - a. **Decapitation must be performed in a location that is separate from a housing room** where live animals are kept, preferably in a **necropsy room**.
  - b. Decapitation equipment should not be moved from room to room. If relocation is necessary, equipment should be cleaned and disinfected before and after relocation.
  - c. If using a guillotine, place on a stable surface before use and during operation. Decapitation should be performed in an area that is conducive to tissue derivations and with little personnel traffic.
  - d. The use of plastic cones such as DecapiCone<sup>®</sup>, for animal restraint is recommended to provide adequate restraint, minimize distress, improve positioning and enhance proper safety.
  - e. Always ensure hands and fingers are away from the blade.
  - f. Do not depress the lever or close scissors until fingers are out the blade's path.
  - g. Decapitation equipment must not be used until proper training has been completed and documented in accordance with **IACUC Principle XX.5**, using **CMDC 222**.
  - h. Decapitation equipment must have sign SC #272 attached to it.
4. Cleaning after each use:
  - a. Rinse decapitation equipment under forceful water to remove blood and tissues.
  - b. Clean with disinfectant (e.g., Oxivir Tb).
  - c. Turn the guillotine upside down ensuring blades are open to facilitate drying.
  - d. Dry scissors in an open position.
5. Ensure guillotines are lubricated as needed with a silicone lubricant.
6. **Guillotine and scissor blades must be replaced when deemed not sharp enough to perform adequately.**
7. Functional testing of decapitation equipment is required prior to use. Testing the function of guillotine or scissors may be done using an already euthanized animal prior to use. Functionality testing that results in an incomplete decapitation will require replacement of the guillotine or scissors.
8. Inoperable blades or scissors must be disposed of in a sharps container.

**Approved:**

**Date:**