



**THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO
INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE**

SUBJECT: Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) Guillotine and Scissor Maintenance and Testing Standard Operating Procedure

DATE: 5/21/2025

This document provides the approved practice and procedures for guillotine and scissor maintenance and testing to ensure a human method of euthanasia by decapitation. The 2020 *AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals* requires that “*equipment used for decapitation must be maintained in good working order and serviced on a regular basis to ensure sharpness of blades*”. Alternatively, blades must be sharpened or replaced as needed. A service log or “date of last service” tag must be used to document that service/replacement/evaluation was conducted. This documentation must be available for IACUC inspection.

Responsibilities

- The PI must ensure that all personnel using guillotine or scissors are properly trained in its use and monitored for competence.
- Personnel using guillotine or scissors for decapitation must check that the equipment is in good condition with a sharp blade prior to use.
- A sharpness test must be performed to ensure proper usability.
- Failing guillotines or scissors must never be used and must be clearly marked (e.g. “do not use” or “not in use”).
- Personnel using guillotines or scissors are responsible for their proper cleaning and good operation after use.
- PIs are required to establish a mechanism to identify guillotines and scissors used for euthanasia and to document that service/replacement/evaluation was conducted.
- The IACUC or its designee will inspect all guillotines and scissors and service logs, as part of the semi-annual inspection.

Procedures

- Prior to use, the guillotine or scissors must be inspected for rust, damage, tension, smoothness of operation, and blade cleanliness.
- Before each usage the guillotine or scissors must be tested for sharpness using either a rubber band or polyethylene tubing. or commercially available scissor sharpness testing material
 - If the blade does not cut cleanly in one attempt, the blade will need to be sharpened or replaced before use.
- After each decapitation, the guillotine or scissors should be rinsed and/or wiped down with cold water to remove all blood and tissue.
- At the end of each session of use, and before storing, the guillotine and scissors should be thoroughly cleaned (using an enzymatic detergent or a stiff brush to scrub all surfaces, including hinges, if needed) and then disinfected. A final 70% alcohol rinse including blade and handle will ensure evaporation and reduce the need to hand-dry the equipment.

- Periodically the moving parts should be lubricated (a medical grade lubricant to the pivot joint of the scissors, or a silicon spray, such as WD-40 or equivalent to the guillotine) for smooth movement of those parts and good maintenance.

Reference

1. *The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*, 8th Edition. National Research Council Committee for the Update of the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US).
2. AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals: 2020 edition.