POLICY

Decapitation is justified for studies where undamaged and uncontaminated brain tissue is required. The IACUC requires that individuals using guillotines are properly trained and proficient in its use to assure humane euthanasia. The guillotine action should be smooth with no perceptible binding or resistance. The blade must be clean, rust-free, and sharp and decapitate with minimal force. All animals must be sedated or anesthetized before decapitation unless scientifically justified and approved by the IACUC. The guillotine and log of usage/maintenance may be inspected by the Protocol Assessment Liaison (PAL), CM staff or the IACUC at any time.

REQUIREMENTS

PHS Policy Section IV.C.1.g. Methods of euthanasia will be consistent with the recommendations of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Panel on Euthanasia, unless a deviation is justified for scientific reasons in writing by the investigator.

AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals Recommendations--- …The equipment used to perform decapitation must be maintained in good working order and serviced on a regular basis to ensure sharpness of blades. The use of plastic cones to restrain animals appears to reduce distress from handling, minimizes the chance of injury to personnel, and improves positioning of the animal. Those responsible for the use of this method must ensure that personnel who perform decapitation have been properly trained to do so and are monitored for competence.

PROCEDURES

1.0 Responsible Parties:
   1.1 The PI must ensure that all personnel using the guillotine are properly trained and proficient in its use.
   1.2 The PI is responsible for maintaining the guillotine in proper working order.
   1.3 Personnel using a guillotine are responsible for its proper care, cleaning, and use.

2.0 Procedures for Maintaining the Guillotine:
   2.1 Prior to use, the guillotine should be checked for rust, smoothness of operation, and cleanliness.
   2.2 After use, the entire guillotine should be rinsed with water to remove visible contamination. After rinsing, the unit should be thoroughly disinfected. The use of 70% alcohol rinse will assure evaporation and reduce the need to hand-dry the equipment.
   2.3 The guillotine should be periodically lubricated with a silicone spray such as WD-40.

3.0 Sharpening Schedule:
   3.1 The frequency of blade sharpening will vary depending on the frequency of use, the species, and the number of animals decapitated.
   A. A minimum of every 12 months is recommended.

4.0 Documentation of Use and Maintenance:
   4.1 Personnel utilizing the guillotine must maintain a log which documents guillotine usage and maintenance including the following information:
   A. The dates of use.
   B. Species of animal euthanized.
   C. Number of animals euthanized.
   D. Dates of blade sharpening must be documented in the log.
4.2 The log must be available to the IACUC or other regulatory visitors.

**LINKS TO RELATED FORMS, RECORD LOGS, AND SOPS**

Guillotine Usage and Maintenance Log

Suggested Sources for Blade Sharpening