

- SOP No:** AHT 38
- SUBJECT:** Euthanasia of Rats using a guillotine (decapitation).
(June 2015)
- DATE:** 11.02.2012
- REVISED:** 03.06.2015
- POLICY:** Operator must be very experienced and competent at this technique.
- PRECAUTIONS:** Gloves, eye protection, mask, long-sleeved gown, closed in shoes.
Animals may become stressed during handling prior to decapitation. Use a decapicone or other restricting device to prevent movement and possible distress.
Sharp blades are used in this procedure. Use lock when not in use. Make sure blades are sharp before use.
- EQUIPMENT:** Decapicone
Guillotine workstation with 4 cm blades
- PROCEDURE:**
1. Operation at a sink is suggested for cleanliness.
 2. No other animals will be in the same room as each animal is killed. Handling will be kept to a minimum and each animal restrained using a decapicone to prevent movement and reduce stress. Cup the base of the rat's tail at the end of the pipe with one hand to allow appropriate positioning of the animal and to prevent injury to the operator's fingers.
 3. Ensure that the animals head is well positioned between the triangular blades to prevent excision of the animal's nose. The nose stop also allows the animal to be in a secure position. The rat should be positioned such that the blade falls transversely across the neck in one swift motion severing the cervical vertebrae.
 4. Using one deliberate action of the handle, close the blades to detach the head from the rest of the body.
 5. Carefully clean blades with water and ethanol between animals and when done.
 6. Ensure blade lock is in place.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

**This procedure should only be attempted with one rat in the room at a time to avoid distressing others.
Clean blades after use so the next animal is less exposed to blood, thus reducing stress to the animal**


CHAIR OF AEC

REFERENCES

1. American Veterinary Medical Association, Report of the AVMA Panel on Euthanasia, JAVMA (1993) 202: 229-249.
2. *The UFAW Handbook on the Care and Management of Laboratory Animals*, 6th Edition. Ed. T.B. Poole, Longman Scientific and Technical, 1998.
3. *Recommendations for euthanasia of experimental animals*, Report of a Working Party. Reprinted from *Laboratory Animals* (1996) 30:293-316 and (1997) 31: 1-32.