

Procedure: SC-60-101

Date: 6/9/2025

Enabled by: AV/IACUC/ILAR

Supersedes: 4/1/2022

Title: Cleaning and Disinfection of Animal Cages and Accessories

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the minimum requirements for cleaning and disinfecting animal cages and accessories.

II. Policy:

All units providing care for animals must establish standard operating procedures for cleaning and disinfecting animal cages and accessories based on the guidelines established by the Animal Welfare Act, the Public Health Service Policy, the ILAR ***Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals***, and the Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Agriculture Research and Teaching as a component of the animal care program.

III. Procedure:

- The Attending Veterinarian Standard of Care Facility Quality Assurance and Monitoring (SC 50-103) must be followed to ensure adequate cleaning and disinfection of caging and accessories.
- Cleaning and disinfecting cages and accessories in a mechanical cage washer is the preferred method.
- Adequate disinfection is dependent upon the temperature of the water and the duration of contact time with the chemical disinfectant. Wash and rinse water must be 143-180 F for a specified duration of time to adequately achieve disinfection (*Guide, pg. 71*)
 - o **Disinfectants must be used according to manufacturer's guidelines to ensure appropriate dilution and contact time for disinfection.**
- When a mechanical cage washer is not available or a caging accessory may not be washed in a cage washer, hand washing of items may be done as a backup method if the criteria below are followed:

“Washing and disinfection of cages and equipment by hand with hot water and detergents or disinfectants can be effective but require attention to detail. It is particularly important to ensure that surfaces are rinsed free of residual chemicals and that personnel have appropriate equipment to protect themselves from exposure to hot water or chemical agents used in the process (*Guide, pg. 71*)”.

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- o The AV Standards of Care Facility Quality Assurance and Monitoring policy (SC -50-103) must be followed to ensure hand washing procedures are adequate for cleaning and disinfection.
- Urine from some animals (rabbits, guinea pigs, and hamsters) has a high protein content and mineral concentrates, thus cages may require a pre-treatment with an acid solution prior to washing.
- “Monitoring of sanitation practices should fit the process and materials being cleaned and may include visual inspection, microbiologic and water temperature monitoring” (*Guide*, pg. 72). The IACUC Animal Facility Quality assurance policy [SC-50-103](#) provides standards for monitoring and quality assurance testing of equipment and methods used to clean, sanitize, disinfect, and sterilize animal caging and associate equipment and supplies. [IACUC Policy-58 “Sanitization of Handwashed Equipment”](#) provides information about quality assurance testing of sanitization of Non-movable or otherwise specialized caging, behavioral equipment, induction chambers, or enrichment in indoor facilities that cannot be sanitized by a cage wash.