



Title	Maintenance of Blades Used for Anesthesia
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Authorized by	IACUC

I. BACKGROUND

The Public Health Service Policy (PHS) on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals states that Methods of euthanasia used 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 (US Department of Health and Human Services, pg. 10). The PHS requires IACUCs to use the AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals: 2020 Edition which states that decapitation “is acceptable with conditions if performed correctly, and it may be used in research settings when its use is required by the experimental design and approved by the IACUC. Decapitation is justified for studies where undamaged and uncontaminated brain tissue is required” (AVMA, P. 45).

II. PURPOSE

This policy designates the responsibility of the Animal Facility Managers and/or designee, and Principal Investigator (PI) or designee relating to the processes and procedures associated with maintenance of blades.

Blades used for euthanasia via decapitation, such as guillotines and shears, must be kept in working order free of rust, visible nicks, or other damage to the cutting edge, with no binding or resistance and serviced regularly in order to afford animals a humane method of euthanasia in accordance with the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Guidelines on Euthanasia 2020 Edition.

III. POLICY

A. Maintenance of Shared Shears and Guillotines in Common Lab Spaces

Animal Facility Managers or Designees:

1. The Animal Facility Manager (AFM) must follow the manufacturer’s guidelines on device maintenance. Maintenance must be documented in accordance with the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Guidelines on Euthanasia.
2. Documentation should include (at a minimum):
 - a. Service date and/or next due date.
 - b. Initials of the individual verifying serviceability
3. If an AFM or designee is contacted regarding an issue with a guillotine or shears, a contracted service provider will be notified by the AFM or designee.

Principal Investigator (PI) or Designees

1. PIs are required to ensure that guillotines and/or shears are in acceptable working condition prior to use. If not, these instances must be reported to the AFM or designee immediately.
2. PIs are responsible for documenting each use of guillotines and/or shears.
3. If blades are located in an animal area, but are not currently being used on live animals, they must be clearly labeled “not for live animal use” and must be sharpened prior to any use on live animals.

B. Maintenance of Shared Shears and Guillotines in Private Lab Spaces

1. The responsibility for maintaining privately-owned/lab-owned/unshared guillotines and shears is the responsibility of the PI.
2. Principal Investigator (PIs) or their designee(s) must have their guillotines and other similar equipment maintained or replaced at least annually or more frequently as needed based on use.
3. PIs are required to document maintenance. Principal Investigators or their designee(s) who provide documentation from the manufacturer that their device(s) do not require yearly maintenance will be required to follow manufacture’s guidelines.

IV. REFERENCES

American Veterinary Medical Association Panel on Euthanasia, AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals, 2020 Edition.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and National Institutes of Health/Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare, Public Health Service Policy (PHS) on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, Revised 2015.