

COMPARATIVE MEDICINE  
LABORATORY ANIMAL FACILITIES

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE  
for  
CAGE MANIPULATION PROCEDURES (SPF)

- 1.0 Purpose:  
This procedure is to ensure proper cage changing/manipulation to maintain a sterile environment.
- 2.0 Scope:  
This procedure applies to all CMLAF and investigator personnel working in the specific pathogen free unit.
- 3.0 Procedure:
- 3.1 SUPPLIES NEEDED:
- A. Sterile packs of:
    - 1. Cages with bedding.
    - 2. Food and water bottles.
    - 3. Wire lids/filter lids as needed.
  - B. Decontaminated cart.
  - C. Spray bottle containing sterilant.
  - D. Stainless steel container with gauze pads for hand wash.
  - E. Sterile scissors.
  - F. Proper attire. See SOP 1.E.1
- 3.2 PREPARATION:
- A. Obtain a cart from the cage prep area and wheel into the decontamination room.
  - B. Decontaminate the entire cart (be sure to include the wheels) by spraying with sterilant.
  - C. Collect pre-wrapped, sterile supplies from shelf rack stored in the clean side hallway.
  - D. Take cart with supplies into the procedure area where changing station is located.
  - E. Check the HEPA workstation to ensure everything is working properly, i.e. fans working, proper airflow.
  - F. Wipe down entire inside surface areas of HEPA work station unit with sterilant.
- 3.3 CAGE CHANGING/MANIPULATION:
- A. **\*\*\*\*EACH TIME YOUR HANDS LEAVE THE CONTAINMENT OF THE HEPA WORKSTATION, THEY MUST BE SPRAYED WITH STERILANT BEFORE THEY ARE RETURNED INTO THE UNIT!!**
    - 1. Place wrapped cages, bottles and food under the workstation.
    - 2. Using sterile procedures, open packs of cages, bottles and food:

- a. Remove the outer wrap.
- b. Clean hands with sterilant.
- c. Lift out inner contents or open the inner contents.

**\*\*IMPORTANT: ALWAYS SPRAY HANDS BEFORE TOUCHING INNER, STERILE BOTTLES, CAGES, ETC. AFTER OPENING THE OUTER WRAP.**

3. Spray the surface that the cage will be set on with sterilant.
  4. Take the dirty cage from the rack and place it inside of the cabinet with the clean cages on the opposite side.
  5. Remove filter lid from the dirty cage with dirty side down, being careful not to contaminate the interior of the lid.
  6. Wash hands with sterilant.
  7. Remove the water bottle.
  8. Transfer the wire hopper to the clean cage.
  9. Wash hands with sterilant.
  10. Place animals into the clean cage.
    - a. If using forceps to transfer animals they must be soaked in sterilant between cages.
  11. Slide the wire lid closed.
  12. Wash hands with sterilant.
  13. Fill food hopper.
  14. Wash hands with sterilant.
  15. Place clean water bottle in the hopper of the clean cage.
  16. Replace the lid and place the cage back on the rack.
  17. Remove dirty cage and place on the cart.
  18. Spray surface of the cabinet with sterilant and repeat changing procedure until all cages are changed.
- 3.4 Record on SPF Animal Room Activity Log that the plastic cages were changed.
- 3.5 Remove all contaminated equipment to the washroom.
- A. Break down all cages and bottles prior to transporting to washroom.
  - B. If you are returning to the SPF facility cages can be dropped off in cage wash area.
    1. Wear shoe covers into the conventional facility and change them prior to reentering the SPF unit.
  - C. If you are not returning to the SPF facility scrape and wash cages.