



IACUC SOP:	SOP Cage Changing Station for Rodents and Reptiles	
SOP#206.00	IACUC Approved: 07/17/2024	IO Approval: 7/29/2024

Purpose:

This SOP outlines cage changing and transfer station procedures for rodents and reptiles.

1. General Information

First ensure the personnel doing cage changes 1) are trained and 2) check the last date of service on the hood. If the date is not within the year, do not use and contact the IACUC office.

2. Cage Changing Procedure

Transfer station information for rodents is as follows:

- The cage transfer station is not a substitute for a Class II, Type A2 biological safety cabinet. Additionally, it is not a containment device for airborne particulate in low to moderate risk-hazard research as prescribed by the CDC/NIH Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories.
- Prior to use, all transfer station units should be certified by a qualified certifier. Under normal operating conditions, the unit should be recertified at least annually.
 - The certifier should perform the following tests:
 - HEPA Filter Leak Test
 - Average Inflow Velocity
- The transfer station provides animal and personnel protection by a HEPA (99.97% particle removal at 0.3 microns) filtered limited air on the work surface to assure minimal exposure to animal hair/dander. All personnel doing cage changes must wear a mask, gloves, and a lab coat/gown.
- **Do not** overextend the power cord when moving animal transfer station within a room.
- Ensure splash shield is in the lowered position before opening the cage and handling the animal.
- **Do not** cover the holes in the work surface. This will block air flow.
- Ensure cage station is **“ON” for a minimum of 10 minutes** prior to changing cages. Refer to SOP 204.00 *Bedding disposal station use and maintenance*.

Rodents

- Check forceps containers, if present, on the animal cage station to ensure a minimum of 5 rubber-shod forceps have fully emerged in the approved disinfectant. This needs to be changed at the beginning of a procedure. If disinfectant is discolored, dump out remaining disinfectant, rinse container, and refill with fresh disinfectant.
- Check the rubber on the forceps tips to ensure that they are in good condition.
- Wipe down animal cage station work surface with approved disinfectant.
- Remove the dirty cage containing the animals from the holding rack and place it inside the animal transfer station.
- Wipe down the animal rack with approved disinfectant.
- Place a new cage bottom into the animal transfer station and adjacent to the dirty cage.
- Remove the isolator top and wirebar top from the dirty cage and lay across the top of the clean cage. Place dirty bottle into bottle basket.
- Transfer cage card and holder from the dirty cage to the clean cage.



- Remove a pair of forceps, if present, from the approved disinfectant; wring off excess disinfectant, grasp animal, and then move it quickly, but gently from the dirty cage to the clean cage. Between cages, place the forceps back into the disinfectant.
Note: If a rodent escapes from its cage, the rodent must be immediately captured and placed into a separate cage then notify the PI for instructions.
Note: To reduce cannibalism, do not change rodent cages with litters until the litters are one week old. If the cages are excessively soiled, contact supervisor.
- Place the wirebar top into position on the clean cage. Add food to the feeder if necessary.
- Place a new water bottle (ensure stopper is secure on the bottle) into the bottle slot on the wirebar top and then replace the isolator top. Ensure water is dispensing when manually activated.
- Return clean cage containing the animal(s) to the same position on the holding rack.
- After completing the cage change out, wipe down the animal cage station with the approved disinfectant.
- After each cage changeover clean room with a Swiffer and then mop with the IACUC approved disinfectant solution.
- Animal rooms are moped with a disinfectant after cage changing, but room walls are disinfected when rooms are emptied or in the event of an outbreak with a rodent pathogen.
- After each cage changeover, take dirty rodent cages and accessories to the cage wash area.

Reptiles

- Remove reptile from cage and place in a temporary holding container (typically a plastic bin or cloth bag)
- Remove the water bowl and any other cage components. Wash both with soap and water. Rinse and let dry.
- Remove bedding from enclosure and discard.
- Spray the inside of the enclosure with an approved cleaning/disinfectant solution.
- Scrub off any particles that stick to the surface and rinse enclosure.
- Wipe dry with a paper towel, discard the paper towel.
- Inspect the empty cage for damage or wear.
- Add new bedding and replace the water bowl and other cage components.
- Replace the reptile and secure the cage.
- Clean and disinfect all cleaning equipment between uses.
- Enclosures will be inspected daily, and spot cleaned. Soiled bedding will be removed and contaminated water bowls will be cleaned as needed between monthly cage cleanings.
Note: If a reptile escapes from its enclosure, it must be immediately captured and placed into a temporary holding container (plastic tub or cloth bag). Notify the PI for instructions.

History:

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