Institutional Animal Care & Use Program - UTEP	
Title: Sanitation and Sterilization Quality Assurance Monitoring	
Policy Number: 045	**Date in Effect**: 3/23/26
Version: A	**Rev Date**:
In Effect ☒ **Rescinded** ☐	**Date Rescinded**:

A) Background

Maintaining clean and sanitary animal facilities is essential to supporting high quality research and ensuring the welfare of animals used in studies at UTEP. Routine cleaning and disinfection helps control pathogens, reduce environmental stressors, and prevent conditions that could compromise research integrity. Federal requirements, the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*, and Animal Welfare Act, mandate consistent sanitation practices in all animal housing and procedure areas. This policy establishes UTEP's standards for sanitation to ensure regulatory compliance, promote animal well-being, and support a safe and effective research environment.

B) Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide standards for monitoring and quality assurance testing of equipment and methods used to clean, sanitize, disinfect, and sterilize animal caging and associated equipment and supplies. This policy also covers caging, equipment, and supplies maintained by laboratory staff.

C) Policy

All animal housing rooms, support areas, and equipment used for animal research must be maintained as per standards described in the Guide which describes regular sanitation practices coupled with verification measures to ensure adequate sanitation. Equipment used for sanitization and sterilization must be monitored and maintained for adequate functionality as required by the Animal Welfare Act and the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* (*Guide*).

D) Procedures, Guidelines, and Exceptions

1) Cage Wash

Cage wash facilities shall use Replicate Organism Detection and Counting (RODAC) or Adenosine Triphosphate (ATP) based testing to assess sanitation of caging and other reusable husbandry supplies/equipment that have been recently washed, sanitized, and dried at least quarterly. Results must be logged. For automatic cage and rack washers the temperature of the rinse water shall be logged at the beginning of each day prior to running the machine. The preferred temperature for washing and rinsing is 143-180^{o} F (Guide pp. 71). At least quarterly, temperature indicators should be run through cage and rack washers. Results will be logged and kept with machine records.

2) Autoclaves

Autoclaves or other sterilizers in regular use for primary sterilization shall be monitored using a spore ampule or other equivalent biologic indicator at least quarterly. For autoclaves or other sterilizers used infrequently (such as those used less than quarterly) the initial load shall be evaluated using a biologic indicator to ensure the autoclave is still working properly after downtime.

3) Specialized/PI-Managed Caging

PI-managed or otherwise specialized caging in indoor facilities that cannot be sanitized by automatic cage or rack washers and require hand-washing must be treated with a chemical disinfectant at the appropriate concentration and contact time, as specified by the manufacturer. These practices are subject to validation through RODAC or ATP testing at least annually.

4) Other Equipment

Other equipment with direct animal contact may include anesthetic induction and euthanasia chambers, experimental equipment (e.g., elevated plus maze, behavioral chambers), and surgical platforms.

Contact surfaces should be wiped with a disinfectant after each animal or as often as experimental need allows. Validation of these practices must be performed annually through RODAC or ATP testing at least annually.

E) References

National Research Council. (2011). *The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* (8th ed, pp. 70-73). Washington DC: National Academies Press.

Review History	
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