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IG016: MAINTENANCE OF EQUIPMENT USED FOR DECAPITATION

Personnel responsible for performing euthanasia by decapitation must be properly trained and proficient in carrying out the technique. Equipment commonly used for this procedure: Guillotine, scissors, and sharp blades.

Recommendation of the AVMA Guidelines on Euthanasia: "The equipment used to perform decapitation must be maintained in good working order and serviced on a regular basis to ensure sharpness of blades."

Guidelines for Maintaining Decapitation Equipment:

- Before each use: inspect the instrument to ensure that it is rust free, clean, operates smoothly and is sharp enough to perform the function in one clean stroke.
- After each use: the instrument should be wiped clean of any biological materials and be washed in hot, soapy water, and then towel dried. After cleaning, a few drops of light machine oil should be applied to the blade surfaces and blade channels. The blades then should be run together several times to spread the oil evenly over all moving surfaces.
- Maintenance and routine servicing of guillotines: a guillotine that is not in good working order must be repaired/sharpened before use. Blades should be sharpened on a regular basis and, depending on frequency of use, may need to be replaced.
- Maintenance and routine servicing of other equipment: scissors should be sharpened on a regular basis. The interval of servicing required will depend on volume of use. Scalpel blades or razors must be new at the beginning of each euthanasia session and discarded after use.

Contact carvets@msu.edu for assistance obtaining professional sharpening services.