

SOP #: 811.01

Title: SOP - Use and Maintenance of the Steris Rack Washer

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Approvals:  
Attending Veterinarian

Date:

3/27/14

## 1. Purpose

### 1.1 Sanitization of Cages / Racks

1.1.1 Sanitization uses an antimicrobial agent on objects or surfaces to reduce the number of disease-causing organisms to non-threatening levels. Sanitizing does not affect some spores and viruses.

### 1.2 Ensure the proper use, maintenance, and calibration of the Steris cage / rack washer.

1.2.1 Despite built in safeguards, an cage washer presents the possibility of serious injury to technicians from hot surfaces and from the release of live steam or chemicals. It is important, therefore, that the washer users understand the proper operation, limitations, and safeguards for sanitization by washing.

## 2. Definitions:

2.1 Wash Tape - only shows that the tape has been exposed to heat.

2.2 Microorganisms - bacteria, fungi, viruses and bacterial spores.

## 3. Responsibility:

3.1 It is the responsibility of the OLAR Director to perform the following:



3.1.1 Ensure that the washer is operating properly, maintained in good working order and that all required preventative maintenance and calibration activities are performed as recommended by the manufacturer.

3.1.2 Ensure that all research and technical staff using the washer in the facility are adequately trained and experienced in these procedures.

4. Intended Use of Equipment:

4.1 Sanitization of rodent cage components, water bottles, racks, carts, storage containers, etc.

5. Safety Considerations:

5.1 Care should be taken when removing loads from the washer, as they can be hot. Let the items cool before removing.

5.2 Heat resistant gloves or silicon hot pad grippers should be used whenever removing a load from a washer.

5.3 Eye protection, gloves, lab coat, and appropriate shoes (i.e., no sandals, flip-flops, or open toed are allowed).

5.4 Posters with emergency de-energizing procedures as well as escaped methods in case of entrapment are displayed. Personnel are regularly trained on these safety procedures.

5.5 A properly operating washer is essential for safety. Perceived problems should be promptly reported to the Facility Manager for assessment and corrective action to be taken.

6. General Operation:

6.1 Control Panel Operating Instructions:

6.1.1 Touchpad - The Steris washers are installed with a touchpad. The touchpad contains a Liquid Crystal Display (LCD). Cycle progression is displayed by Light Emitting Diodes (LED) on the Operator Panel. Cycle selection is made using the numbered buttons.

11.2.1.2 The LCD screen on the touchpad displays operator information. During programming, the settable parameter and its value are displayed. When the sterilizer is in operation, the LCD displays the status of the cycle in progress. Any fault/error statements are also displayed on the LCD.

6.2 Turn the power on to the sterilizer by using the "Power On" toggle (circuit breaker) switch on the side of the control panel. This will be done during the course of maintenance or validation activities only. Otherwise the power to the unit will remain on at all times and will not be an issue for normal operation.



### 6.3 Cage Pre-Wash Procedure

- 6.3.1 DO NOT bang cages on the side of the bedding disposal. Use scrapers to remove bedding from dirty cages.
- 6.3.2 All equipment needs to be thoroughly scrapped before being run through the cage washer. The cage washer is built to sanitize but not remove gross soil and dirt.

### 6.4 Loading cages & racks

- 6.4.1 Shoebox style cages need to be loaded on cage washing rack so they are positioned for maximum exposure to spray from the water jets in the cage washer.
- 6.4.2 Care must be taken to center wash racks in the middle of the cage washer. If anything hits the jet-rack of the cage washer it will throw the unit off track.
- 6.4.3 Cage accessories, bottles, sipper tubes, food containers, etc., must be washed in a manner that prevents small items from falling on floor of cage washer. The baskets used for washing water bottles can hold small items.
- 6.4.4 Carts and dumpsters should be washed daily.

6.5 Close chamber door by using the LCD touch screen located on the side of the washer. For safety hold the button on the screen pressed until the door is completely closed. If the pressure on the button is discontinued, the door closing will stop.

6.6 Select appropriate cycle using the LCD touch screen:

- 6.6.1 #1 Rodent
- 6.6.2 #2 Bottles
- 6.6.3 #3 Racks

6.7 After the hot drying air in the chamber is vented, the door can be opened by using the touch screen

- 6.7.1 Caution: contents may be hot, wear appropriate protective equipment.

6.8 Power can be turned off to the washer in the case of an emergency or for repairs using the power switch located on the side service access spaces.

### 6.9 Maintenance of cage washer

- 6.9.1 Clean loose parts from under washer floor to avoid clogging pump.
- 6.9.2 Grease all fittings on a weekly basis.



- 6.9.3 Clean jets by poking a wire through them as needed.
- 6.9.4 Problems should be reported immediately to the Manager or Steris Maintenance Technician.
- 6.9.5 Run temp-tape in one load each day after cage washer has reached recommended temperature (180 F).
- 6.10 Cage Storage
  - 6.10.1 Clean cages, racks, and accessory equipment are to be stored in the clean cage area.
  - 6.10.2 Never store dirty cages, accessories, or room cleaning equipment in the clean cage storage room.
  - 6.10.3 Do not enter clean cage room with a cart from dirty cage room or animal room.

