

Optimize SOP SOP - Sterilizing Components



Important

Verify facility sterilizers are calibrated regularly. Animal Care Systems is not liable for damage done to cages or racks by uncalibrated facility equipment.

Cage Sterilization

Removing Cages from the Rack

1. Remove cages using the thumb rest under the filter or the bottom corners of the cage.
2. Pull the cage up and toward you (Figure 1).

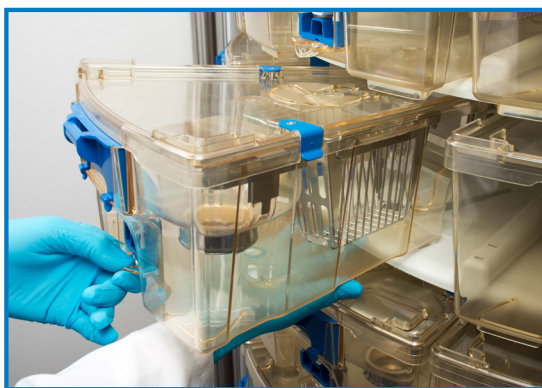


Figure 1



Do not autoclave cages while they are on the rack.

Stacking Cages

Use caution when stacking cages for heat sterilization. Excessive stack heights may overload and warp the bottom cages.

- Limit stacks to 5 cages or cage assemblies unless higher stacks have been internally validated
- Use polysulfone cages for repeated autoclave use



Filter Replacement

Filter life varies based on facility conditions, cage usage, and sterilization frequency. **As a general guideline, cage filters are designed for up to 70 autoclave cycles and should be replaced at least every 2 years.**

Protecting Plastic

To extend cage life, follow these guidelines:

- Avoid using steam with amines
- Ensure cages are completely free of residual disinfectants and rinse agents before heat sterilization
- Residual chemicals cause plastic cracking and clouding



Warning

Allow cages to dry completely before housing animals. Residual moisture may restrict airflow.

<u>Cage Sterilization Temperature Limit</u>		
	Temperature	Maximum Duration
Polycarbonate	250 F (121 C)	20 minutes
Polysulfone	285 F (141 C)	30 minutes

Rack Sterilization

1. Remove all cages from the rack.
2. Open the bottom drain door: Pull the handle toward you and rotate left until it locks into place (Figure 2).
3. Keep the column drain door closed except when washing or sterilizing.
4. For auto-water racks: Open both the bottom drain valve and the air bleed valve (Figure 3).



Figure 2

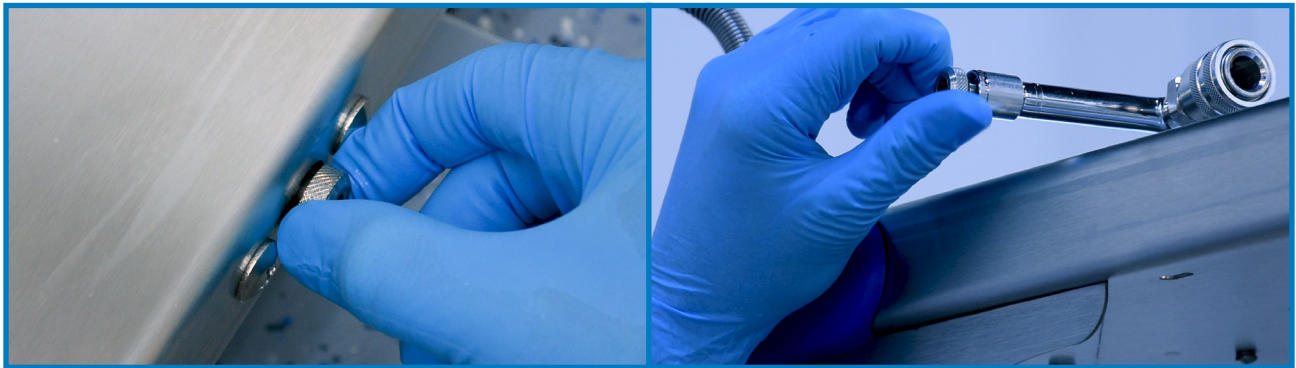


Figure 3



Critical

Open drain and air vent valves before sanitizing or autoclaving. Trapped water can create steam pressure and damage the manifold and valve components.

Sterilization Process

1. Roll the rack into the sterilization chamber and begin the cycle.
2. For steam sterilizer: Allow the rack to dry for at least 60 minutes after the cycle. Keep the drain door open during drying.

<u>Rack Sterilization Temperature Limit</u>
250 F (121 C)



Temperatures above 250 F (121 C) will damage the rack platter.

After Sterilization

1. Allow the rack to completely cool to room temperature.
2. For auto-water racks: Close the drain valve and air bleed valve only after the rack has cooled.
3. Close the bottom drain door: Pull the handle toward you, rotate right, and release.
4. The rack is now ready for use.



Heat-sterilizing the rack while the cages are still docked will damage the rack.