**Cage Washer: South Skaggs 068**

Last Reviewed: May 2, 2024  
  
**I. Purpose**  
This standard operating procedure is designed to describe the proper use and maintenance of the cage washer in Skaggs Building 068, Getinge model 9100 series, in order to maintain the sanitation of animal cages.

**II. Responsibility**  
It is the responsibility of all LAR staff to know the proper use of the cage washer and to understand the different cycles, safety features, and routine maintenance procedures.

**III. Protective Clothing**

* A designated lab coat and gloves must be worn when handling dirty animal contact materials.
  + Lab coats are located inside of SSB 068 by the entrance
  + Gloves are located above the sink as well as below the CO2station
* When handling clean animal contact materials, wear scrubs (a clean lab coat is also ok) and clean gloves.

**IV. Procedure**

* The cage washer is typically left on, however, if it’s off, turn it on via the control panel on the left side of the cage washer.
* The main power breaker is located on the wall on the right side of the cage washer.  The main power breaker should always be in the ON position
* The “P1 Short Acting Cycle” is the only cycle that LAR uses on a day-to-day basis
  + If you need to change the cycle:
    - Press "Select Cycle" on the screen
    - Use the up and down arrows to make a selection, then press “Enter”
* Press the "Open Door" button once, then press it again and hold until the door opens and the threshold is secured (a small metal bridge will slide out in order to remove the rack (AKA “tree”))
* Remove the tree from inside the cage washer
  + Use caution; do not hit the sensors on the inside of the cage washer
* Load dirty caging onto the tree (\*Note: these are recommendations, not strict guidelines):
  + Lids are typically put on the top shelf
  + Hoppers are placed on the second shelf
  + Boxes are placed on the third shelf
  + Miscellaneous items (baskets of cage cards, enrichment, lixits, water bottles, etc.) go on the bottom shelf
  + Make sure that the spinning sprinkler arms located on the underside of the rack are clear of hitting any caging
  + For the first load of the day, be sure to tag the load with a temperature strip sticker
* Carefully push the tree back into the cage washer
* Press the “Close Door” button once, then press it again and hold until the door is closed and secured (a small piece will emerge from the corner of the door frame that holds the glass door in place)
* Press "Start"
* Record the load in the logbook which is located on the shelf above the sink
* At the end of the wash cycle, clean items are unloaded directly from the cage washer onto a clean cart in SSB 067B (clean side), then transferred into 067A (clean storage room)
  + Retrieve the temperature sticker and place it in the logbook

**V. Safety Features**

* Emergency STOP button on both doors of the cage washer
* Doors can be manually slid open from inside the washer by sliding either left or right
* Emergency safety cable inside chamber near the wall that can be pulled to automatically open door

**VI. Monitoring Cage Washer Chemicals and Maintenance**

* Monitor chemical usage in 30-gallon drums per Sanitation Strategies via quarterly testing of pH, water hardness, and dosing; recorded in a notebook in HSB 009.
* When chemical levels start getting low, draw a line on the drum with a sharpie and write the date in order to monitor
* Clean the grates/screens once per week

**VII. Sanitation Monitoring**

* SystemSURE ([see SOP](https://www.umt.edu/laboratory-animal-resources/sops/sop-system-sure-sanitation.php)) - indicates that sanitation has occurred; use once a month
* Thermolabel Temperature Strips ([see SOP](https://www.umt.edu/laboratory-animal-resources/sops/sop-thermolabel-temp-strips.php)) - indicates that temperature of 180°F was achieved; use one strip on the first cage wash load each day.

**VIII. Troubleshooting**

* For specific cage washer problems, call Getinge Signature Services: (800) 950-9912
* For specific facilities problems, call UM Facilities Services: (406) 243-6091
* Alert facility manager whenever technical difficulties arise