I. Introduction: The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines to researchers regarding acceptable methods of tissue collection for the purpose of rodent genotyping and identification.

II. Definitions:
Toe clipping – removal of the distal phalangeal (coffin) bone of one or more paws.

III. Guidelines:
   a. As stated in the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (the Guide, p. 75): "...toe-clipping should be used only when no other individual identification method is feasible. It may be the preferred method for neonatal mice up to 7 days of age...especially if toe-clipping and genotyping are combined."
   b. Toe-clipping involves removal of the distal phalangeal bone (toe) of one or more limbs. Only one toe per foot may be removed. Aseptic practices should be followed. A pair of sharp scissors can be used for this procedure; the scissors must be disinfected in between uses. If necessary, hemostasis can be achieved by using a silver nitrate stick or Quick Stop powder, or by placing a gauze square over the site and applying gentle pressure until bleeding has stopped.

IV. Responsibility: Investigators should consider alternative methods of rodent identification (such as ear notching, ear tags, tattooing) to toe-clipping especially if genotyping in not needed. If toe-clipping will be used, this should be stated in the investigator’s animal care and use protocol.

V. References:
   - Animal Welfare Regulations, 9 CFR Chapter 1, Subchapter A, Part 2, Subpart C, Section 2.33(b)1-5
   - Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 8th Edition (2011)
   - Institutional Animal Care and Use Guidebook (OLAW 2nd edition)
   - PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals