

**SOP No:** AHP 62

**SUBJECT:** Toad Pithing

**POLICY:** This technique must only be attempted by personnel experienced in the technique.

**PRECAUTIONS:** Gloves, eye protection, long sleeve gown, closed in shoes.

**EQUIPMENT:** Pithing rod of 1 - 2mm diam.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Hold the animal firmly in the left hand (or right, if you are left handed) with the head ventrified gently with the forefinger creating a gap between the first vertebra and the occiput.
2. Hold the rod near the end of the shaft and insert forcefully into the brain through the foramen magnum. Rotate the end of the shaft to 'wiggle' the inserted point around within the braincase, destroying all brain tissue.
3. Slowly withdraw the rod until it rests on the superior border of the neural arch.
4. Rotate the rod posteriorly and push the shaft through the neural arch (spinalisation).

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The pithing rod needs to be of stainless steel or any ferrous or non ferrous material. Kirschner wires of vanadium are ideal.

Toads may be easier to handle if kept at 5°C for 20 – 30 minutes.

**DATE ISSUED:**

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**REFERENCES**

1. Tyler M.J Frogs and Toads as Experimental Animals In *ANZCCART News* (1999) 12:1