



Standard Operating Procedure – BlockParty®

Introduction and Precautions

The Block Party accessory option allows multiple OptiMICE cages on the same level of a rack to be connected with plastic tubes to combine living quarters. The connecting tubes insert into ports located at the front of Block-Party-equipped cages; the ports are fitted with spring-loaded doors that close to seal the cages when tubes are removed. Any number of adjacent cages within a single level on a rack can be connected to form a Block Party Chain.

Note: The OptiMICE internal water bag holder (P/N: C79126) is not compatible with Block-Party-equipped cages. Any facility intending to use water bags must request external water bag cage tops (P/N: C79290MH/C79290PH) for use with Block Party cages.

Cages are equipped with tube ports in three different configurations, each corresponding to a cage position within a Block Party chain.

- Single port, right side: Must be located at the left end of the Block Party Cage chain.
- Single port, left side: Must be located at the right end of the Block Party Cage chain.
- Dual port: Can be located at any position in the chain (required for interior positions in chains of three or more cages)

Caution: When removing connecting tubes from active cages, it is imperative to ensure no animals are situated in the tube, no bedding or other debris is trapped in the door interface, and the doors close fully. If a door remains ajar, there is a remote possibility that animals could devise a way to pry it open and escape.

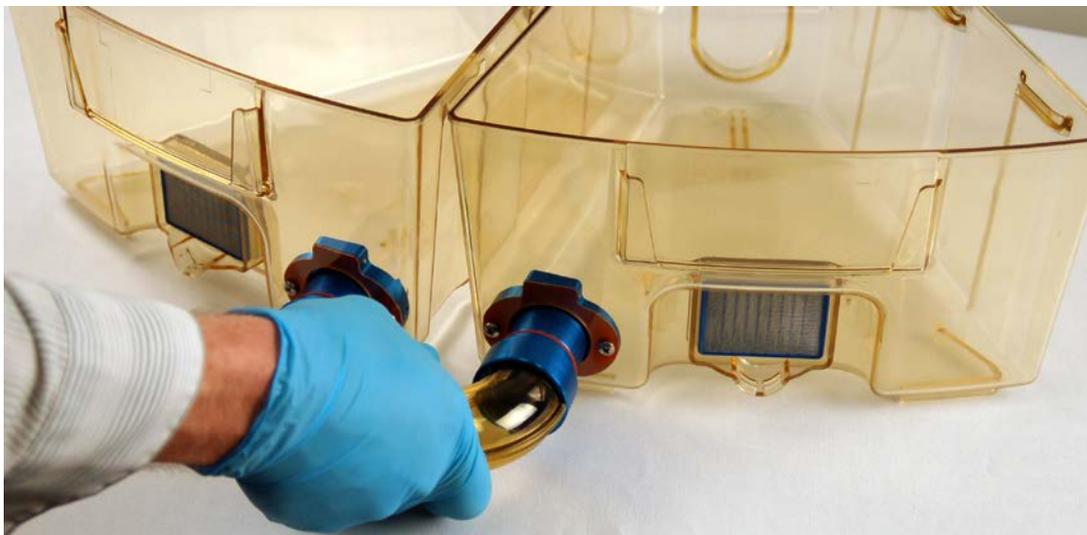
Although the tube port doors, when closed, will fully and reliably contain the animals, they do represent a slight compromise in bio-security, as a closed door does not create a fully hermetic seal. For this reason, we recommend against long-term use of Block Party Cages without connecting tubes installed, especially if bio-security is of primary concern.

Installation and Use

The first step of installation consists of removing the desired adjacent cages from the rack, transferring animals to Block Party equipped cages, and replacing the cages on the rack. Consider the desired location of the Block Party chain, and ensure cages with the correct tube port configurations are selected and properly positioned. Interior cages (when three or more are connected) must have two tube ports, and terminal cages (at the ends of the chain) must have a single tube port on the side bordered by the next Block Party cage.



Once the cages have been replaced on the rack in the correct position, the Connecting Tube(s) can be inserted. Be sure to insert the two ends of each tube assembly straight and evenly into the tube ports to prevent binding or jamming.



The spring-loaded door will be forced open, and when the tube is fully inserted, a latching feature will drop into a detent on the aluminum tube end, holding it in place. An O-ring located just beyond the detent provides an airtight seal at the connection point.



When removing a Connecting Tube, ensure all animals are out of the tube and clear of the tube port doors. Grasp the tube at the center and pull firmly outward. The latch is spring-loaded and will detach with sufficient force; ensure the tube ends are extracted evenly from the ports. The tube port doors will spring shut, and the cages will now function independently as a standard cage. As previously noted, make certain that no debris or bedding is trapped preventing the doors from closing fully.

Cleaning and Maintenance

Block party cages can be washed and autoclaved using the same guidelines as standard cage components of the same plastic type. We do, however, recommend hand washing cages if possible. Polysulfone can be autoclaved up to 275°F (134°C) for 30 minutes, and polycarbonate can be autoclaved up to 250°F (121°C) for 20 minutes.



All Block Party connecting tubs are made from anodized aluminum and Radel R plastic and can be autoclaved at 275°F (134°C). It is important to note that the plastic tube pieces are actually half tubes, and the threaded aluminum end connectors hold the plastic tube halves together. After washing and autoclaving, gently twist the connectors to ensure they have not loosened during the process. We recommend periodically removing the aluminum connectors, disassembling the tube halves, and washing the component pieces individually to thoroughly clean any residue or bedding that may have built up on the threaded interface or the tube interior.

Note: The top and bottom halves of the tube assembly are identical parts and fully interchangeable.