

Guidance for Laboratories: Clearance Procedures for Research Laboratories or Storage Spaces

rev. 2026-0601

Background Information

This document provides guidance on procedures for moving or exiting laboratory space(s) where procedures have been performed or there has been storage of potentially hazardous materials.

Potentially Hazardous Materials may include but are not limited to:

- Infectious agents (viral, bacterial, fungal)
- Recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid materials (ex: plasmids with inserts, viral vectors)
- Human or infected animal blood, fluids, cells, and tissues.
- Human blood, blood products, fluids, tissues, cell lines
- Toxins of biological origin (ex: cholera toxin, tetrodotoxin, botulinum neurotoxin)
- Corrosive, acutely toxic, sensitizing, oxidizing, flammable, or reactive experimental chemicals
- Radionuclides, Radiation producing equipment
- Laboratory equipment that has been used in conjunction with the above listed materials

IN ORDER TO RECEIVE CLEARANCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH SAFETY, THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES MUST BE COMPLETED.

Procedures

I. Determine what hazardous materials are currently housed in your laboratory, and of these, determine which of these materials will be moved to your new location, transferred to another investigator, or disposed.

A. If any biohazardous, chemical, or radioactive materials will be shipped off campus, all appropriate DOT/IATA regulations must be followed. Please contact Environmental Management (859) 323-6280 for information on shipping requirements.

B. Some materials may be moved between UK laboratories using appropriate primary and secondary containers.

1. Primary containers.

a. Seal the agent in a leak-proof primary container. Typically, this is the vial or container in which the agent is stored.

b. Small or delicate items should also be placed in a sealed, plastic zip-top style bag.

2. Secondary containers.

a. Place primary container in the secondary container.

b. Secondary container should be of a leak-proof and shatter proof design capable of containing contents if dropped in transit.

c. Thin or non-reinforced Styrofoam containers are NOT appropriate for use as secondary containers. These types of containers are not shatter-proof.

Ensure the outside of secondary container is devoid of contamination of hazardous materials before removing from the lab space. If the originating lab possesses biohazardous materials, disinfect the outside of the secondary

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- a. container with a 10% bleach solution followed by water or 70% ethanol to remove bleach residue¹.
 - b. Label secondary container with a universal biohazard sticker or radiation symbol/sticker, if transporting these materials. See the end of this document for examples of these symbols.
3. Transport secondary container to new location.
 - a. Do not wear gloves while transporting the secondary container. Disinfection of the outer surface of the container removes the need for gloves.
 - b. Choose appropriate transport path.
 - i. Avoid high traffic areas and areas where patients are present.
 - ii. Use freight elevators.
 - iii. Minimize transport outside of buildings.
 - c. Remove the primary container and place in new storage location.
 - d. Disinfect inside and outside of secondary container if needed, based on transported contents.

II. No hazardous materials, waste, or contaminated equipment may be left in the laboratory. Please ensure that all hazardous materials and waste remaining in the laboratory are properly decontaminated and disposed of via Campus Optics ticketing/pickup, autoclaving or chemical disinfectant approved for the agent(s) in use.

- A. Check in cold rooms, freezers, and refrigerators for materials that could easily be forgotten. Old samples, chemicals, materials from past staff and students or inherited samples must be either disposed of or moved. These pieces of equipment, if remaining behind in the lab space, must be emptied, and will be checked before clearance is issued by Research Safety.
- B. Disposal of preserved specimens may require special handling since the preservative is usually a hazardous chemical. If the tissues/organs are small (mouse size organs) and not easily recognizable, the entire vial may be treated as chemical waste. However, larger human organs must be separated from the liquid preservative and disposed into red bag waste and the liquid collected as chemical waste. Please contact the office of Environmental Management (859) 323-6280 for disposal of either red bag or chemical waste.
- C. All stock chemical containers, prepared reagents, or other chemicals utilized in research procedures must be removed from the lab before clearance can be issued. Chemicals and chemical preparations may be disposed of by completing the waste ticketing process in Campus Optics. Further assistance may be acquired by contacting Environmental Quality Management at (859) 323-6280.
- D. Disposal of radioactive materials requires notification to and pickup by the Radiation Safety Team. Please contact the Radiation Safety team at (859) 323-6276.
- E. All Sharps materials should be collected into an approved secure lidded sharps container and disposed through Campus Optics/Environmental Management (859) 323-6280.

III. Clean and decontaminate all work surfaces including bench tops, doors, and cabinet handles. If the laboratory had biohazardous materials in use, decontamination shall be performed with freshly prepared 10% bleach solution followed by water or 70% ethanol to remove bleach residue.¹

IV. Decontaminate all equipment that has been used in conjunction or contaminated with hazardous materials. Any equipment that has been labeled with the universal biohazard or radiation symbol must be inspected by and cleared by Research Safety representatives:

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- A. Clean inside and outside of equipment with soap and water.
- B. Wipe down inside and outside of equipment. Biohazardous materials requires wipe down with a suitable disinfectant appropriate for the agent(s) in use and which is specified on the laboratory's Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) registration. For radioactive materials, consult the Radiation Safety Team at (859) 323-6276.
- C. Below you will find specific decontamination information for common laboratory equipment.
 - 1. Refrigerators/Freezers
 - a. Clean out refrigerator and defrost freezer if present.
 - b. Triage contents to reduce what is to be moved or disposed.
 - c. Refrigerators and freezers must be emptied of all contents.
 - 2. Incubators and water baths
 - a. These must be drained of all standing water including water in water-jacketed incubators.
 - 3. Liquid nitrogen dewars
 - a. Remove contents of dewar.
 - b. Allow any remaining liquid nitrogen to evaporate from dewar in a well-ventilated area.
 - 4. Biological Safety Cabinets (BSC)
 - a. Remove all contents from the BSC.
 - b. Wipe down inside and outside exposed surfaces with a disinfectant solution such as 10% bleach solution followed by water or 70% ethanol to remove bleach residue. At no time should the user attempt to access the inner mechanical system of the BSC.
 - c. In certain cases, BSCs may need to be decontaminated by a certified contractor prior relocation or use by the next laboratory occupant. If you are exiting a laboratory that contains a BSC, please contact the Biosafety team at (859) 257-1073 one month prior to your exit date to allow for sufficient time to schedule any additional required decontamination.
 - 5. Chemical Fume Hoods (CFH)
 - a. Remove all contents from the CFH and ensure surface is cleared of any debris.
 - b. If the inside of the CFH is free from spills, clean the inside working surface and sash with soap and water. Dry with paper towels.

V. When you have completed the procedures described above, please email labsafety@uky.edu to schedule the required Lab Clearance audit and any remaining equipment clearance. This audit documents the space as cleared of all hazards and is required of all research science laboratories before relinquishing occupation of a lab space. An example of the Research Safety lab clearance form can be found at the end of this document. **PLEASE NOTE: HOUSEKEEPING STAFF SHALL NOT BE PERMITTED TO DEEP CLEAN THE SPACE BEFORE DOCUMENTATION OF THE CLEARANCE OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS.**

VI. Please note that lab exits may involve other departments within Environmental Health and Safety (EHS), depending on the scope of work and materials in use.

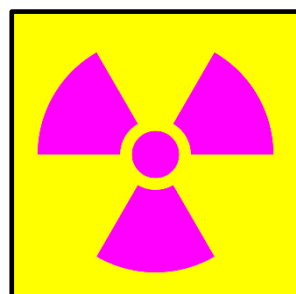
- A. Disposal of radioactive waste or equipment that contains a radioactive source (for example, liquid scintillation counters, gas chromatographs) should be coordinated through **Radiation Safety (859) 323-6276**.
- B. Oils must be removed from pumps, capacitors, power supplies, or other oil-filled equipment. Once drained into an appropriate container, Environmental Quality Management (EQM) can assist with disposal of the Used Oil. **EQM can be reached at (859) 323-6280.**

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Additional Notes

¹A 10% bleach solution followed by water or 70% ethanol to remove bleach residue is the most commonly recommended disinfectant at UK. Appropriate contact time for 10% bleach is 15-20 minutes. However, laboratory personnel should choose a disinfectant that is approved for the agent(s) of use in their laboratory. Information on the approved method of disinfection for your agent(s) can be found in the Primary Investigator's approved UK Institutional Biosafety Committee Registration Form.

Example Forms and Signs



 Research Safety

EQUIPMENT CLEARANCE

EQUIPMENT:	
MODEL #:	
LOCATION:	
UK INVENTORY #:	
DEPARTMENT:	

The equipment listed above has been evaluated and deemed suitable for surplus and/or repair.

 Biological Safety (859) 257-1073 ☒ Date: / /

 Chemical Safety (859) 257-8655 ☒ Date: / /

 Radiation Safety (859) 323-6308 ☒ Date: / /

No 7902

This equipment has been inspected by the UK Department of Research Safety and deemed safe for transport between UK properties.

 Research Safety

VOID IF REMOVED!

Biological Safety (859) 257-1073 Chemical Safety (859) 257-8655 Radiation Safety (859) 323-6308

University of Kentucky
Department of Research Safety

CLEARED FOR MOVE

 Research Safety

This equipment has been cleared by the UK Department of Research Safety and may now be moved between UK laboratory locations.

Biological Safety (859) 257-1073 Chemical Safety (859) 257-8655 Radiation Safety (859) 323-6308

 Research Safety

1001 Veterans Drive Lexington, KY 40545-0015 Phone: 859-257-1049 Fax: 859-323-4752 <https://researchsafety.uky.edu>

Laboratory Clearance Form

This space has been verified upon visual inspection as cleared of experimental chemicals, pharmaceuticals and radiological materials by the University of Kentucky Department of Research Safety. Clearance of the laboratory must be issued by the Department of Research Safety prior to final clearing by PPD housekeeping staff.

LABORATORY INFORMATION		DATE OF CLEARANCE:	
Building:	Room:		
Principal Investigator:	Department:		
Laboratory Contact (printed):	Lab Contact Signature:		
Research Safety Representative (printed):	RS Rep. Signature:		

LABORATORY EXIT CRITERIA	Y/N	Yes	No
Laboratory Clearance procedure conducted prior to PPD exiting the university?			
Has all equipment labeled previously with the universal biohazard symbol (excluding BSC) been cleaned, decontaminated, and tagged for surplus (if it) planned for removal or by biohazard waste removed to decontaminate, if remaining in place?			
Have all universal radioactivity symbols or labels been removed from equipment and/or the space?			
Have all research stocks of chemicals, biologicals and radiological materials been removed from the lab?			
Have all fridges, freezers, and incubators been emptied of all contents?			
Have laboratory benches, work surfaces, and countertops have been wiped down to remove debris, spills, or other evidence of experimental materials (i.e. chemicals, biological materials)?			
Has all hazardous waste been removed from the lab (i.e. biohazard, radiological, chemical)?			
Will the Biological Safety Cabinet (BSC) remain in the lab?			
Has the BSC been decontaminated by a certified vendor?			
If professional decontamination is not required, has the BSC been surface cleaned and decontaminated?			
Is decontamination of the BSC required before removal from the space (i.e. used in conjunction with RG2 infectious organisms)?			

PLEASE NOTE: Biological safety cabinets, if moved from their location require re-certification by a licensed vendor after placement in the new location and prior to use.