



Decommissioning of Laboratories and Laboratory Equipment

Category: Health and Safety;

Jurisdiction: Vice President, Administration and Finance; Vice President, Research and Innovation

Approval Authority: Executive Team;

Established on: March 17, 2015;

Amendments: None.

Preamble

This policy was created to ensure that University laboratories scheduled for renovation, reoccupation, or demolition are free from all physical, chemical, radioactive and biological hazards. Failure to take responsibility for physical, chemical, radioactive or biological materials can create unsafe conditions. Hazardous materials left behind can be expensive and time consuming to manage. Principal Investigators and Departments are responsible for all costs incurred in the process of identification of wastes not managed through the appropriate decommissioning process. It is therefore, important that the Principal Investigator (professor, instructor, researcher who is leaving the University), who is experienced with the hazards, handle the disposal of hazardous waste and decontamination of equipment and laboratory surfaces.

Scope

The following procedure must be implemented by any principal investigator, researcher, instructor, laboratory or clinical manager who is decommissioning a laboratory, laboratory area or laboratory equipment, prior to leaving the University, relocating, or renovating their

laboratory. This also applies to Department Chairs, or designate in the event of death, disability or termination of the previously mentioned personnel under their responsibility.

Definitions

(PI) Principal Investigator Primary Researcher, grant holder.

Applicable Legislation:

Occupational Health and Safety Act, Sections 25(2)h, 26(1)c, 27(2), 28(1).

Occupational Health and Safety Act, Regulation 851, R.R.O, 1990, Industrial Establishment

Occupational Health and Safety Act, Regulation 860, R.R.O. 1990, WHMIS

Ontario Reg. 833 R.R. O. 1990, Control of Exposure to Biological and Chemical Agents

Ontario Reg. 835-846, R.R.O. 1990, for Designated Substances

Human Pathogens and Toxins Act (S.C. 2009, c. 24)

Policy

Responsibilities

Principal Investigator (PI)

1. Upon notice of retirement, resignation or other termination of employment the Principal Investigator (PI) must provide a plan for decommissioning, in writing to the Health and Safety Office and their Department Chair. NOTE: more than 60 days are required for disposal of radioactive wastes.
2. The PI is responsible for cleaning and decommissioning laboratories and workplaces that they vacate, so that they are left in a safe manner and are free from hazards.
3. The PI is responsible for the costs associated with the decontamination of equipment and facilities. Exceptions may be made by the Department Chair.
4. Workplaces shall not be turned over to new occupants for use, or to contractors for renovation or demolition until they have been inspected and approved by the Department Chair, Administrative Head, or designate and Health and Safety.

5. Reallocation of equipment purchased by the University/Faculty or from the granting agencies resides with the Office of the Dean in consultation with PI, Department Head and Office of Research.
6. The Health and Safety Office may be contacted for advice regarding decontamination of surfaces and the disposal of hazardous and non-hazardous waste.
7. Refer to the Health Canada Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines regarding the decontamination and disposal procedures for any biological materials. Additional questions and concerns can be forwarded to the Health and Safety Office.
8. Microbiological cultures are to be decontaminated prior to disposal. Cultures preserved in liquid or solid media are to be autoclaved according to standard decontamination procedures.
9. The Biosafety Officer must be contacted prior to disposal or transfer of any biological materials that were imported under an importation permit. The material must be disposed of or transferred in accordance with the permit conditions.
10. If cultures are to be saved and used in new areas or in new projects, a successful application must be made to the Lakehead University Biosafety Committee prior to their relocation.
11. The Health and Safety Office will be notified prior to the transfer of any hazardous materials to other areas or facilities. Any chemicals or biological materials that are not being transferred must be properly disposed/transferred.

Human Resources

1. Human resources officers will notify Health and Safety of any upcoming departures of PIs, promptly after notice is given.
2. When notified of a departure, the Biosafety Officer/Health and Safety Officer will contact the PI to determine whether assistance is required to safely decommission the laboratory.
3. Biosafety Officer/Health and Safety Officer will review PI's written decommission plan to ensure PI responsibilities and all regulatory obligations are met.
4. Biosafety Officer/Health and Safety Officer and a representative of the Joint Health and Safety Committee will inspect the lab prior to decommissioning.

5. Biosafety Officer/Health and Safety Officer will inspect the lab after decommissioning to ensure the space has been properly decommissioned.

Guidelines

Laboratories must not be vacated without being left clean, tidy and free from hazards. Items in the workplace may require decontamination prior to removal or disposal. The following recommendations are appropriate for *due diligence*:

- All chemical containers must be properly labeled, stored and sealed.
- Any hazardous materials, including chemicals or biological materials, which are being disposed of must have a completed waste inventory request filed with the Health and Safety Office and are appropriately labeled.
- Laboratory glassware must be empty and cleaned.
- Refrigerators, autoclaves, ovens, freezers, incubators, fume hoods and storage cabinets must be cleaned and decontaminated.
- Lab bench tops, fume hood work surfaces and any other laboratory surfaces must be washed and free of hazardous contamination (i.e. storage cabinets, floors, sinks, telephones, door handles etc.).
- All hazardous materials and non-hazardous materials must be removed from shared spaces and disposed/relocated with the other laboratory goods.
- Any equipment that will be removed/repaired/disposed must be decommissioned prior to travel and the Equipment Decommissioning Tag (available on the Health and Safety Website) must be completely filled out and visible. A work order (Physical Plant) must be placed for disposal.
- All hazard signs associated with hazardous equipment must be removed when the equipment is moved.
- All refrigerators and freezers are to be emptied prior to being moved, unless express permission has been obtained from the Department Head.
- Compressed gas cylinders must be returned to the supplier.
- Unused hazardous consumer products should be disposed as hazardous waste (i.e. cleaning solvents, paints, thinners, oils, pesticides etc.).
- All keys and identification cards must be returned to the Department.

- Any non-autoclavable biological waste (i.e. ampoules) must be treated as hazardous waste, itemized for disposal, waste pick up request filed with the Health and Safety Office to be sent for incineration and must be appropriately labeled.
- Signs, posters and non-University property must be removed.
- Any invalid warning signs must be removed from laboratory doors.
- All non-hazardous waste must be properly disposed.
- Any equipment containing hazardous materials as part of their make-up (i.e. mercury lamps, ballasts and transformers containing PCB, etc.) must also be disposed properly.

The laboratory supervisor may be required to provide a written statement regarding the status of decommissioning to the Department Chair detailing conditions, materials or equipment left in vacated areas.

This policy will be evaluated every three years by the Health and Safety Office and the Joint Committee for Occupational Health and Safety – Labs and Studios.

Review Period: 3 years;

Date for Next Review: 2023-2024;

Related Policies and Procedures: To be determined;

Policy Superseded by this Policy: None.

The University Secretariat manages the development of policies through an impartial, fair governance process, and in accordance with the Policy Governance Framework. Please contact the University Secretariat for additional information on University policies and procedures and/or if you require this information in another format:

Open: Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm;

Location: University Centre, Thunder Bay Campus, Room UC2002;

Phone: 807-346-7929 or Email: univsec@lakeheadu.ca.