

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE
ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY DEPARTMENT**

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Subject Laboratory Decommissioning & Equipment Clearance Procedures		
Reference UH PI Checkout Procedure & Equipment Clearance Form UT Lab Decommissioning & Equipment Clearance Form		Special Instructions None
Distribution Laboratory Faculty & Staff	Reevaluation Date As Needed	No. Pages 9

I. PURPOSE

The UHCL Laboratory Decommissioning and Equipment Clearance Procedures provides a pathway for changing Principal Investigators (PI) in a lab, when a PI leaves the university, or preparing a laboratory for renovation activities. Laboratory decommissioning is where all hazardous materials, waste, and contamination are removed from a lab space vacated for another researcher or renovation purposes. Many activities associated with this process require a long lead time, and planning is critical to ensure a smooth and successful transition. This document assists by streamlining the process by which hazardous materials within a laboratory will be handled, relocated, or disposed of properly before a changeover of ownership or renovation.

The approval of the Laboratory Decommissioning and Clearance Form within this document identifies that the lab has been inspected by EHS and cleared of potential hazards before the next lab user or other occupant enters the area. This form includes a checklist for decommissioning a lab and a signature page for final clearance of the space.

The Equipment Clearance Form within this document may be utilized independently when equipment alone needs to be transferred, serviced, or disposed of. The equipment form can also be submitted simultaneously with the Laboratory Decommissioning and Clearance Form.

Additional information regarding Laboratory hazards may be obtained within the UHCL [Chemical Hygiene Plan](https://www.uhcl.edu/about/administrative-offices/environmental-health-safety/) and other safety documents found on our website <https://www.uhcl.edu/about/administrative-offices/environmental-health-safety/>

II. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Department Chair – Ensures that this procedure is distributed to all Laboratory Faculty in their department. The ultimate responsibility for executing the laboratory changeover lies with department leaders to establish that these procedures are being followed and submitted to EHS 30 days before a planned departure.

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE
ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY DEPARTMENT**

- B. Laboratory Faculty (PI)** - Laboratory Faculty must submit the applicable forms to Environmental Health & Safety to begin the decommissioning process at least 30 days before the anticipated change. The laboratory must be clean of all materials and in a condition that is deemed safe for the next occupant. It is the responsibility of the Laboratory Faculty to ensure that all hazardous materials have been prepared for relocation or disposal by working in conjunction with EHS. Per this procedure, all laboratory equipment must be cleaned and purged of contaminants before disposal or relocation can be arranged.
- C. Environmental Health & Safety (EHS)** is responsible for verifying that the labs are clear of all hazards before allowing other occupants or individuals in after-decommissioning forms have been submitted for review. Environmental Health & Safety will evaluate the existing area, coordinate waste activities with the PI (or Chair if applicable), and certify that the instruments in the lab have been properly cleaned, treated, and prepped for relocation, storage, or disposal. EHS will provide or post a notice on the door verifying that the lab has been cleared of hazards. EHS will also provide or post tags/stickers on specialized instruments identifying they have been cleaned of contaminants before removal.
- D. Facilities Management and Construction (FMC)** – Contractors may need access to the lab to service the room, relocate equipment, repair fume hoods, or prepare the area for renovation. EHS needs to verify that no hazards exist for non-lab staff or contractors and that the room is safe to access. **FMC will not move equipment or enter the lab without EHS review and clearance. Contact EHS and FMC if you require assistance in the lab.**
- E. Costs** – In general, costs associated with decommissioning a lab due to a PI relocating or separating from the university are the responsibility of the academic department or business unit. Types of costs associated with changes in laboratory assignments include but are not limited to charges to decontaminate the laboratory, disposal of laboratory waste products, testing of unknown materials, and relocating, certifying, or disposing of equipment.

III. LABORATORY CLEARANCE PROCEDURES

The PI must implement the following process before leaving the university or relocating to a different lab. In the event of a PI's sudden departure from the University, the Chair should contact EHS immediately to submit the Laboratory Decommissioning & Equipment Clearance forms.

- A.** Submit documentation at least thirty (30) days before the expected date of laboratory changeover.
- B.** EHS will update the online EHS Assistant management platform by changing your room number(s) and preparing your files to be moved.
- C.** All laboratories may contain one or a combination of physical, chemical, biological, and radiological hazards. The lab must be cleaned by neutralizing, disinfecting, or removing the existing hazard. The laboratory must then be completely emptied

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE
ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY DEPARTMENT**

(drawers and cabinets) to the satisfaction of the next user. EHS will then perform a final walkthrough in the lab to determine if all hazards have been removed and the room appears clean and ready for the next user. Once this is done, a signed form or sticker will be placed on the door to denote that the lab has been cleared.

- D. Equipment** - Make sure all equipment is completely emptied and safe to touch or move. If the unit is a refrigerator or freezer, the unit must be unplugged, defrosted, disinfected, decontaminated, and wiped dry. ICP/GCMS analyzers need to be purged and may also contain radiation sources. If you have concerns about the equipment's safety, contact EHS for assistance. Other types of equipment commonly found in a lab, such as a centrifuge, must be cleaned and disinfected. After this is performed, EHS will verify that the equipment is ready to be relocated and provide a label to place on it.
- E. Chemicals** - All chemicals, including waste chemicals, must be removed from the laboratory and/or laboratory equipment.
- i. Chemicals must not be left in the room after a PI's departure. These chemicals must be inventoried, moved to the stockroom, or disposed of by EHS. If a PI wants to inherit chemicals left from a previous PI and it is classified as a highly hazardous chemical, the PI must obtain the same level of clearance as the previous researcher before EHS grants access and use. Guidance documents for Highly Hazardous Chemical Approvals can be found in the [UHCL Chemical Hygiene Plan](#).
 - ii. Chemicals must be sealed and labeled clearly with name and hazard by Hazard Communication Standards. Chemicals must be placed in a secondary container (tub, bin, box with packaging, etc.), for relocation.
 - iii. Empty containers must be triple rinsed, and labels defaced before disposal in normal trash (for non-glass containers) or reused for waste.
 - iv. Containers containing residues that cannot be rinsed, will be disposed of as Hazardous waste per RCRA guidelines.
 - v. DEA Controlled Substances (Schedule I – V regulated through the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) should not be on campus without a permit held by the user. The Office of Sponsored Programs should maintain copies of the DEA license, the department chair, and copies sent to EHS. All DEA-controlled substances shall be destroyed by the researcher via DEA-approved methods or shall be turned over to EHS for destruction as per the DEA permit.
- F. Cylinders** - All cylinders shall be disconnected, and the cap must be put securely on. If a cylinder cap is not available, one must be purchased or provided by a vendor before moving the cylinder. Any cylinders retained shall be moved to a designated cylinder storage area (Such as the STEM loading dock) or designated cylinder storage area (with mounts) using a chained/strapped cylinder dolly. The supplying vendor should pick up unwanted cylinders once contacted. The department responsible for the cylinder(s) is responsible for contacting the vendor and arranging for their return. EHS can be contacted for assistance with this.

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE
ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY DEPARTMENT**

- G. Fumehoods** - All fumehoods must be cleared of contents and cleaned thoroughly.
- H. Radioactive Materials** - All radioisotopes must be disposed of in the appropriate waste containers per the UHCL Radiation Safety Manual and regulatory requirements. The UHCL Radiation Safety Officer (RSO) will review the Laboratory Decommissioning & Equipment Clearance forms for this type of lab. The Laboratory Faculty and RSO must contact the Radiation Safety Committee to complete the inventory verification form before leaving UHCL to show that all radioisotopes have been removed from their inventory.
- i. All laboratory areas and/or equipment that use radioactive materials will be wipe-tested by the UHCL RSO for contamination. If contamination is present, the area must be decontaminated to remove all radioactive contamination. The area shall be cleaned to wipe test counts below 1000 dpm/100 cm².
- I. Biological Materials** - All biological hazards must be removed from the lab, and all surfaces must be disinfected.
- i. Clean and disinfect all laboratory surfaces and equipment with an approved disinfecting agent appropriate for the agents used (such as freshly prepared 10% Bleach, 70% Ethanol, Lysol, Cavicide, etc.). Ensure proper contact time for adequate deactivation of biohazardous agents.
 - ii. Biological safety cabinets must be decontaminated before being relocated.
 - iii. Biological safety cabinets must be recertified before use.
 - iv. Biological materials needing relocation must be moved to the same Biosafety level lab and storage unit.
 - v. All materials must be marked with the date, identifiers, and the researcher's name. All biological materials being relocated to storage, use, or for waste must utilize secondary containment.
 - vi. Contact Environmental Health & Safety for assistance with the disposal of biohazardous material (select agents, biological toxins, cultures, frozen stocks, tissues, etc.) by chemical destruction, autoclaving, or incineration as appropriate.
- J. Other Waste:** All glassware and laboratory apparatus shall be cleaned and put away. Damaged glassware that is **not biological waste** shall be tied up in a plastic bag inside a sturdy cardboard box labeled "Broken Glassware." Housekeeping personnel will remove broken glassware boxes from the labs if placed by the door and have a Trash Sticker. Glassware that is on the controlled glassware list must be broken/rendered unusable before discarding.

For assistance with other waste materials or questions, contact Environmental Health & Safety (281-283-2106).

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE
ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY DEPARTMENT**

LABORATORY EQUIPMENT CLEARANCE FORM

This form must be completed by laboratory personnel and emailed to Environmental Health & Safety for approval for each piece of equipment. All laboratory equipment being moved, serviced, or disposed of must be cleared of hazardous materials, cleaned, and decontaminated, and tagged with a sticker label provided by EHS or this signed form.

Faculty: _____ **Phone:** _____ **Email:** _____

Lab Room: _____

Relocation Needed? Where? _____

Disposal? _____ Surplus? _____

Equipment Type: _____ Manufacturer: _____

Model #: _____ Serial #: _____

Previously Used with:

- Chemicals
- Biological Materials
- Radioactive Materials*
- Other _____

Equipment Cleaning and Decontamination Process: (Insert information or add page)

** If radioactive materials were used in the equipment, a wipe test and survey will be needed.*

Certification that the equipment is cleaned and decontaminated of all chemicals, biological, and radioactive contaminants:

Print Name *Signature* *Date*

Environmental Health & Safety Approval:

Print Name *Signature* *Date*

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE
ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY DEPARTMENT**

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**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE
ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY DEPARTMENT**

LABORATORY DECOMMISSIONING CHECKLIST & CLEARANCE FORM

Lab Faculty: _____

Lab(s): _____

1. Chemicals

- Separate and evaluate all chemicals for transfer or waste disposal. Place them in secondary containment and ensure the labels are clearly written.
- Transfer only non-highly hazardous classified chemicals to another Laboratory Faculty or stock room. Update inventory of transferred materials for waste or storage. High-hazard Classified Chemicals require approval from EHS and/or the Research Safety Committee.
- Dispose of waste chemicals through Environmental Health & Safety (all chemicals must have completed hazardous waste labels affixed to each container)
- Contact EH&S for the destruction of Select Agent Toxins or DEA-controlled substances.
- Return gas cylinders to the supplier (non-returnable cylinders may be disposed by EHS).

2. Radioactive Materials, X-Ray Machines, Lasers

- Inform the Radiation Safety Officer and the Radiation Committee of your intended move.
- Transfer surplus radioactive stocks or sealed sources to another authorized Permit within HSC and remove item(s) from inventory/registration.
- Dispose of all waste radioactive material through EH&S.
- Decontaminate and wipe test all areas of the laboratory (below 1000 dpm/100 cm²)

3. Biological Materials

- Inform the Biological Safety Manager of your intended move.
- Decontaminate biosafety cabinets, clean benches, dump stations, etc.
- Remove biohazardous materials (cultures, frozen stocks, tissues, etc.) by properly transferring them to the stock area or a PI that has the approval for the same substance. Utilize secondary containment for transfer and waste materials. Update Inventory stock destined for stock or waste.
- Autoclave or incineration waste as normal. Contact EHS for assistance with additional waste services if needed.
- Clean and disinfect all laboratory surfaces and equipment.

4. Housekeeping

- Clean and decontaminate laboratory room and equipment (including fume hoods).
- Clean and decontaminate all laboratory surfaces.
- Ensure that all garbage, laboratory supplies, glassware, books, binders, or debris are removed from the laboratory. Add labels to identify all contents.
- Submit Equipment Clearance request for all items to be removed from the laboratory.

Intellectual Property (List items) _____

Capital Assets (List items) _____

