



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Environmental Health & Safety

PROCEDURES FOR VACATING A LABORATORY



Principal Investigator:	Building & Room(s):
Department:	Telephone Contact#:
Project Manager:	Moving to: Vacate Date:

Whether planning a renovation, relocation or vacating a Columbia University (CU) laboratory significant coordination and advanced planning is required. Laboratory personnel serve a primary role in helping to ensure laboratory facilities are left in a safe condition suitable for re-occupancy or renovation. EH&S will work closely with your laboratory’s designee(s), as well as with Facilities Management and Space Planning, to help prepare for the safe & efficient turnover of space, including shared spaces, such as common equipment and tissue culture rooms. It is essential that coordination of this process begin as soon as it is known a lab will be vacated. Please contact the [EH&S Research Safety Specialist \(RSS\)](#) assigned to your laboratory once this information is known. Early communication & coordination will afford all parties adequate time to address the items required to properly vacate. Once the lab has completed the action items below, EH&S can issue “Clearance” to your Department &/or Facilities Management, to proceed with renovation or re-occupancy. To avoid delays for both departing & arriving occupants, please follow this guidance carefully. **Under no circumstances shall a laboratory be vacated or a “Clearance” be issued by EH&S without verifying the following procedures have been completed.**

Research Safety Specialist information: <https://research.columbia.edu/content/research-safety-specialist-territory-assignments> or labsafety@columbia.edu CUMC: 212-305-6780 Morningside, Lamont, Nevis: 212-854-8749

Radioactive Materials (RAM)	DONE
RAM must NOT be transported via trains, cars, or CU shuttles	Y/N/NA
Label all containers to clearly identify isotope, activity, and type of waste.	
Evaluate and sort radioactive materials to either 1) be moved or 2) disposed as waste.	
Survey and wipe-test lead bricks, lead pigs, shielding, and source containers to verify decontamination (you must check all drawers, cabinets, etc.). Assemble the materials for EH&S to survey. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If discarding, submit the RAM pickup form*. If moving to another lab, obtain ‘Clearance’ from EH&S. 	
To move RAM, you must contact the RSO office. For radioactive shipments off campus, after receiving RSO approval, complete & submit the Intent to Ship form: https://research.columbia.edu/system/files/EHS/BioSafety/IntentToShipHazardousMaterialsForm.pdf	
To remove radioactive waste, complete the RAM pickup form *.	
Update radioactive material inventory records for disposal and new locations.	
Return all badges, if leaving CU, by notifying the Dosimetry Coordinator.	
Last step: Exit survey of rooms & equipment will be conducted by an RSO Representative.	
Controlled Substances	
EH&S is unable to take possession of Controlled Substances. All DEA/NYSDOH Controlled Substances must be properly managed by the NYSDOH licensed & DEA registered owner (a.k.a. Registrant) of the substances and can either be (choose one)... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Returned via a DEA approved reverse distributor. Refer to the University’s Policy for the Acquisition, Use & Disposal of Controlled Substances and review the procedures with your RSS or <input type="checkbox"/> Relocated to the Registrant’s new location. An amendment identifying the new location must be sent to both DOH & DEA prior to relocation. Refer to CU’s Policy for Acquisition, Use, and Disposal of Controlled Substances and review the procedures with your RSS. 	

Chemicals	
Includes chemical waste, reagents, prepared solutions, used or new oil, & household cleaning products or anything that cannot be poured down the drain. Please refer to the Policy on Drain Disposal of Chemicals : https://research.columbia.edu/content/policy-drain-disposal-chemicals	
Label all containers to clearly identify contents. Disposal of unknown materials or chemicals is extremely difficult and costly. If not identifiable, contact your RSS to assist.	
Evaluate and sort chemicals into categories: 1) to move, 2) to redistribute to others, and 3) waste for disposal.	
General/Furniture movers are not permitted to move chemicals! Federal, state & local laws require specific procedures when moving chemicals. Contact your Research Safety Specialist to identify an appropriate vendor based on the material being moved as well as guidance on proper packaging and transporting/shipping of chemicals. The approved vendor responsible for packaging and transporting hazardous materials must prepare and sign the hazardous materials shipping documents as “Shipper” and “Carrier”, with Columbia personnel signing only as a “Consignee” on behalf of Columbia University.	
Complete the Chemical Waste Pickup * for disposal of hazardous waste and unwanted chemicals. For large quantities, note ‘Lab Cleanout’ in the comment box.	
Last step: Inspect all lab spaces and ensure all chemicals are gathered for easy removal by EH&S. You must check all drawers, cabinets, refrigerators, etc.	
Microorganisms, Cultures, and DNA	
Clinical or research materials, including but not limited to cultures & stocks of microorganisms & human or animal specimens that may contain pathogenic or nonpathogenic microorganisms.	
Inventory & label all containers to clearly identify contents.	
Evaluate & sort biologicals into categories: 1) move, 2) research materials to preserve, and 3) waste.	
If moving materials in liquid nitrogen Dewar flasks, contact RSS for information on using dry nitrogen shipper(s).	
Dispose of all (non-sharp) potentially bio-hazardous waste from the laboratory in red bags: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Including bench pads & disposable liners/covers from work surfaces & solid media & supplies <input type="checkbox"/> Decontaminate all liquid cultures by autoclaving or by treating for 30 minutes with a 10 % bleach solution before drain disposal. 	
Sharps	
Needles, syringes with or without needles, razor blades, all pipettes, pipette tips, & anything that can puncture a plastic bag.	
Fill out the appropriate online pick-up request form for radioactive & chemically contaminated sharps. For non- segregated sharps containing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Affix a radioactive waste label to the sharps container and check the Radioactive Sharps box on the label. Submit the RAM pickup form * for disposal. <input type="checkbox"/> Chemically & biologically contaminated sharps may be placed directly in sharps containers providing there are no free liquids. Place closed containers outside the door of the laboratory for pickup. 	
Laboratory Equipment	
Decontaminate lab equipment that is to be left in place, moved, sold as surplus, or disposed of via EH&S.	
For refrigerators, freezers, centrifuges & other movable equipment that may be contaminated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Chemicals: remove all chemicals & glass, clean with soapy water solution or suitable alternative. <input type="checkbox"/> Biological materials: clean, disinfect with freshly prepared 10% bleach or 70% ethanol solution, remove warning stickers. <input type="checkbox"/> RAM: clean, decontaminate using “rad con” or a suitable alternative, survey, wipe-test & contact RSS for ‘Clearance’. 	
For incubators, disconnect CO2 line, drain water jacket, disinfect, remove warning stickers, & contact RSS for ‘Clearance’ statement.	
For biological safety cabinets (BSC), contact maintenance service vendor to conduct gas-decontamination before relocating or discarding. Recertification by service vendor is required after a BSC has been relocated.	

Submit Facilities online-service request for removal of lab equipment to be discarded, after RSS has provided 'Clearance' statement.	
General Housekeeping	
Lab spaces, including shared and support areas must be left in a "broom swept" condition prior to vacating	
Remove all debris from fume hoods, BSC, & bench tops.	
Clean & disinfect (using freshly prepared 10% bleach or 70% ethanol solution) bench tops, furniture, other surfaces, laboratory hoods, storage cabinets, & other fixed equipment. Contact RSS for 'clearance' statement for equipment, spaces, etc.	
Contact Facilities to order trash/recyclable/red bag bins & to remove recyclable glass, plastic, universal waste (e.g., computers, lamps etc.). All computer hard drives must be wiped by CUIT.	
Clean glassware if necessary. Redistribute usable glassware to stockrooms and other laboratories.	
For other empty glassware, use practices commonly employed to empty the container (e.g., collect as chemical waste and then rinse clean). Deface the label & place in a cardboard box labeled "Caution - Glass" for Facilities to remove.	
Oxygen Sensor	
If departing the University, contact Fire Safety at fire-life@columbia.edu , for removal.	
If remaining within the University, contact Fire Safety at fire-life@columbia.edu , for relocation.	
Tissues Fixed in a Hazardous Chemical	
If being discarded, must be separated, with the tissue going into red bags and the chemical into a labeled container for chemical waste. If a large quantity of such material is to be disposed, contact EH&S.	
Complete the Chemical Waste Pickup Form **	
Gas Cylinders: Return/Disposal	
Compressed gas cylinders can only be moved using a cylinder transportation cart. EH&S strongly advises contacting the service vendor.	
Remove regulators, hosing & manifolds. Appropriately cap all cylinders and lecture bottles.	
Return cylinders to stockroom or supplier.	
Complete the Chemical Waste Pickup Form ** for disposal of non-returnable lecture bottles.	

Laboratory Designee (Print Name): _____ Date: _____

Laboratory Designee (Sign): _____ Date: _____

Research Safety Specialist (Print and Sign): _____ Date: _____

List name of vendors expected to be used during this project: