

DRAFT

May 2, 2014

Laboratory Safety Manual

Lab Closure for Imminent Hazard

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) formally inspects each lab on campus at least annually and is frequently in laboratories to provide technical or regulatory assistance, pick up chemical waste or respond to a concern. If EHS becomes aware of an imminent hazard, every effort will be made to correct the problem and immediately eliminate the hazard. For example if there was a power cord serving active laboratory equipment and the cord was completely frayed, this would be a serious risk of fire or electrical shock. In this case the equipment might be taken out of service using a lock and tag system. In other cases however corrective actions may be more involved and require special equipment or assistance from outside contractors. For example an ongoing chemical leak or spill may require a hazardous materials response team to contain and clean up the release.

This section describes the process to be used when closing a laboratory due to an imminent hazard and applies to all laboratories and supporting areas in any building owned, operated or leased by the university on or off campus.

What is an Imminent Hazard?

An “imminent hazard” is defined as an immediate risk to life, property or the environment including the following:

- an immediate danger to a faculty, staff, students or visitors
- an imminent danger of fire or explosion
- an ongoing or recent chemical, biological or radiological release
- a release to the environment that triggers immediate notification the US EPA , Mass. DEP or the Boston Fire Department

Administrative or training deficiencies are not considered imminent hazards.

Close the Area and Evacuate

If an imminent hazard is identified, the Director of EHS or their designee is authorized to order the immediate evacuation of the laboratory and the closure of operations. The area will be secured with locks and/or a police detail will be assigned. A closure sign will be posted with EHS contact information.

Notification

As soon as practical EHS will notify the Principal Investigator or department head of the closure, the reason for these actions and the steps needed prior to reoccupation or start up. A written Closure Order

will be prepared by EHS. A copy of the Closure Order will be promptly distributed to the departments and offices listed on the attached Closure Notification Roster

The Principal Investigator or department head affected will be fully briefed by EHS as soon as possible. A brief written corrective action plan will be prepared by EHS. If the closure is expected to last more than 24 hours (long-term closure), EHS may consult with member of the Laboratory Safety Committee and seek their comments and recommendations.

For long-term closures, the PI or department head can appeal the closure decision to the Laboratory Safety Committee. The Laboratory Safety Committee will quickly convene a meeting or organize a conference call to review the closure and the appeal. A majority of the Committee is needed to make a recommendation. The Chair of the Committee will then forward the recommendation to the Provost and the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance for resolution.

Reopening and Reoccupancy

As soon as the corrective actions have been implemented and the area is safe, the laboratory will be reopened even if there are additional remedial actions such as retraining for laboratory staff. Notice of the reopening will be promptly provided to the PI, department head and those listed on the Notification Roster

Closure Notification Roster

- ✓ Chair, Laboratory Safety Committee
- ✓ Office of the Vice Chancellor- Administration and Finance
- ✓ Office of the Provost
- ✓ Department of Public Safety
- ✓ Office of Emergency Management
- ✓ University Health Services
- ✓ Facilities Management
- ✓ Customer Service
- ✓ Governmental Relations and Public Affairs