

Decommissioning Laboratories

Standard Operating Procedure

SOP Number: L-03-02

Effective Date: December 2025

Last Review: December 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to ensure safe and compliant transitions in laboratory occupancy when an investigator vacates laboratory space. This SOP requires that all research materials be removed and that the investigator carries out proper laboratory decommissioning, e.g., that all laboratory equipment, fixtures, and furniture are thoroughly cleaned and decontaminated.

The SOP is administered by the University of Massachusetts Boston Office of Environmental Health and Safety (UMB OEHS).

2. Scope

Principal Investigators (PI), lab directors are responsible for complying with this SOP, including providing advanced notice of a laboratory move.

The UMB Space Committee may request decommissioning of a laboratory space if they have approved a move or change in use of space.

This SOP applies to all research, teaching laboratories and research support spaces owned by UMass Boston that use chemicals, biological materials, radioactive materials, and controlled substances.

3. Precautions and Hazards

Research materials (e.g., chemicals, biologicals, radioactive materials, controlled substances, etc.) left in a vacant laboratory pose hazards to OEHS staff, contractors, construction personnel, and future occupants. The hazards are more serious when such materials are unlabeled, unidentified, and improperly stored.

Research materials that are not properly labeled and stored may be ineligible for redistribution or recycling, making disposal the only viable option. Disposal costs of unlabeled material can be significantly high, due to extra characterization and handling.

4. Procedure

4.1 Laboratory Move Preparation

Before any laboratory move or closure can occur, the following steps are recommended:

1. Notify OEHS about lab move or closure.
Depending on the size and scope of the move, research activities should be stopped 1-2 weeks prior to the lab closure.
2. Segregate materials eligible for relocation/redistribution from waste.
3. All lab waste should be properly labeled for OEHS removal.
4. Wipe down all lab benches and research equipment that were in contact with hazardous materials with an appropriate disinfectant.
5. All sharps, beakers, burners, equipment, and other materials in drawers, on benches, shelves or on the floor must be disposed of properly. If research materials must be moved to another location on campus or shipped off campus, OEHS must be contacted for approval.
6. Return all lab coats.

4.2 Chemical Safety

If the laboratory has chemicals, the following preparations must take place:

1. Label chemical waste and unwanted chemicals as laboratory waste.
2. Track barcodes of exhausted chemical containers and chemical containers for disposal on the barcode tracking sheet.
3. Submit an online request for laboratory waste removal.
Chemicals moved to other locations on campus must be placed in a leak proof secondary container before moving on a cart. OEHS can assist with the move.
4. Return compressed gas cylinders to the vendor. Contact the Receiving Department to ensure timely removal.

4.3 Radiation Safety

If the laboratory space has used radiological material, the following steps must be taken:

Contact OEHS at least 8 weeks in advance to coordinate proper handling, decommissioning and license transfer. Radioactive material moves involve clearances that are time-consuming.

4.4 Biological Safety

If the laboratory has biological material, the following preparations must take place:

1. Use appropriate disinfectants, prepared in accordance with manufacturer's instructions, to decontaminate all equipment that was in contact with biological material.
2. Ensure an approved vendor decontaminates biosafety cabinets (BSC). Decontamination should take place at least 2 days before the move.
3. Secure biological material moved within buildings in two sealed leak-proof containers and before placing them on a cart to move to a new location. Contact OEHS for assistance. Secure all materials in -80 freezers before the move.
4. All biological waste should be autoclaved or collected for proper disposal.

4.5 Coordination with Move Company (If applicable).

Prior to moving company arrival:

1. All laboratory waste should be removed by OEHS.
2. All equipment and bench tops must be decontaminated.
3. Identify decontaminated equipment that is ready to move. Lab personnel should be present to answer contractor/mover's questions.

5 Roles and Responsibilities

5.4 Office of Environmental Health and Safety

1. OEHS is responsible for ensuring PI and other lab personnel follow proper guidelines when decommissioning a lab.
2. OEHS is responsible for removal of laboratory waste.
3. OEHS is responsible for updating laboratory safety signage and lab chemical inventories.

5.5 Principal Investigator

The PI is responsible for ensuring established SOP's and guidelines are followed when decommissioning a laboratory space. **The PI must notify OEHS 30 days in advance before decommissioning a laboratory space.**

OEHS notification is required even if the PI is using partial space in a shared laboratory.

5.6 Departmental

Department Chairs are responsible for:

1. Timely communication with UMB Space Committee and OEHS when there are changes to laboratory spaces.
2. The costs of decontamination and disposal of research materials.
3. Ensuring that vacated laboratory space is not re-occupied without proper approval from OEHS.
4. Ensuring that construction or renovation does not commence in decommissioned laboratory space without prior notification to OEHS.

6 References

Laboratory Decommissioning Standard, ANSI Z9.11 (2016), American National Standards Institute.

[UMB OEHS Laboratory Equipment Decontamination SOP](#)

[UMB OEHS Laboratory Waste Disposal](#)

7 Equipment and Supply Materials

Decontamination equipment supplies
Laboratory waste tags
Personal protective equipment.

8. Training

Basic laboratory safety training for anyone working in a laboratory space.

9. Definitions

Laboratory Decommissioning – Process of properly cleaning, decontaminating, and securing a vacated lab space so that it is safe to use for a new occupant, renovation, or demolition.

Principal Investigator – Leads and directs research projects, holding responsibility for all activities conducted within designated lab space(s).

10. Recordkeeping

OEHS will keep copies of Laboratory Decommissions and any other relevant documents, data, or checklist.

11. Approved Signature

	Zehra Schneider Graham OEHS Director	12/18/2025
Approved by signature	Name, Title	Date