



## UH Laboratory Checkout/Intent to Vacate Procedures

### Purpose

In compliance with UH MAPP Policies [06.02.03](#) and [02.04.05](#), Principal Investigators (PIs) must ensure that all hazardous chemicals, biological agents, radioactive materials, and wastes under their authorization/supervision are properly disposed of, transferred to another laboratory, shipped, or removed. Strict adherence to this procedure will significantly reduce the likelihood of accumulating orphaned chemicals, some of which may become dangerously unstable. Uncontrolled inventories of hazardous chemicals, biological agents, or radioactive materials will inevitably lead to storage issues, increased waste disposal costs, contamination, or potential injuries to personnel who may need to clean, reorganize, or reuse the space.

This document presents a set of procedures which must be followed before a research group is vacating their laboratory space on UH main campus. Principal Investigators (PIs) are responsible for ensuring compliance with these procedures and leaving the vacated laboratory ready for occupancy.

### Laboratory Checkout Procedures

#### Notification:

PI must notify EHS via [ehs@uh.edu](mailto:ehs@uh.edu) at least 30-days in advance of the pending move/closure by completing and submitting the [Laboratory Checkout/Intent to Vacate Notification Form](#). Advance notice is required to allow adequate time for the scheduling of laboratory clean outs and compliance with regulatory requirements.

1. Upon receipt of the notice, EHS will schedule a walkthrough with the PI or delegate and/or the representative from the PI's department.
2. EHS will address any safety concerns identified during the walkthrough. As a team, EHS will jointly develop a close-out plan that is customized to the laboratory and will agree upon target dates for critical process steps.

**Note: If circumstances do not allow prior notification, or the PI has already vacated the laboratory, the Department Head will be responsible for designating or directing the laboratory checkout procedures.**

#### General Close-out Guidelines:

General points are covered to help you safely and efficiently vacate your laboratory spaces. Where needed, more consultation will be provided by EHS.

1. Review your laboratory space and shared spaces to ensure all hazardous and unknown materials (hazardous chemicals/radioactive materials/biological agents) have been identified with proper labels and no new ones have been



created while preparing to vacate the space.

<https://www.uh.edu/ehs/labs/chemical-safety/chemical-container-labels/>

2. Prior to allowing other PIs or laboratory employees to remove chemicals from the laboratory, you must notify EHS for a survey of the chemical containers. There may be chemicals in poor condition or highly reactive that should not be transferred to other laboratories but removed by EHS.
3. Gas cylinders and lecture bottles should be returned to the supplier. If lecture bottles cannot be returned to the supplier, EHS will pick up lecture bottles via the [online waste removal request](#). Tubing and regulators connected to corrosive or hazardous compressed gas cylinders must be detached using safe procedures such as purging and venting to a hood or ventilated area. Contact [ehs@uh.edu](mailto:ehs@uh.edu) for assistance with this process.
4. If you have a DEA controlled substance, it must be managed under the requirements of your registration. If you no longer wish to keep the controlled substances in your possession, contact EHS. If you are relocating the controlled substance, you must get approval from DEA prior to relocating.
5. If you are an authorized user on a radiation protocol, inform the Radiation Safety Officer (RSO), who will assist in the following:
  - Removing existing or remaining radioactive sources.
  - Requesting removal of radioactive waste via a waste request.
  - Decontamination-see below
  - Returning any dosimetry badges to EHS.
6. If biological materials are part of your teaching or research, contact the EHS Biological Safety Manager for assistance.
7. **Remove everything** from laboratory storage areas, e.g. refrigerators, freezers, cupboards, cabinets, shelves, drawers, etc.

#### Decontamination:

Laboratory equipment or laboratory surfaces must be cleaned and decontaminated before vacating the space. Personnel conducting the decontamination process must wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to ensure safety. Proper decontamination requires the wipe down of all contaminated surfaces with a cleaning agent capable of removing the contaminant.

1. All radiation laboratories and equipment (i.e., refrigerators, centrifuges, incubators, etc.) must be decontaminated to the approved levels by the PI or the designee prior to leaving. Copies of the PI's final surveys and wipe tests must be sent to EHS. EHS will confirm decontamination by performing subsequent surveys and wipe tests. All radiation labels and signage will be removed during the EHS closeout procedures, and the laboratories will then be released to other PIs for use. Equipment unable to be decontaminated may need to be disposed of as radioactive waste. The Laboratory Equipment Safety Clearance form can be found at [https://uh.edu/ehs/forms/files/equipment\\_safety\\_clearance\\_form.pdf](https://uh.edu/ehs/forms/files/equipment_safety_clearance_form.pdf)



2. If the equipment has been used with high hazard chemicals (e.g., mercury), EHS may require that the item be disposed of as unwanted materials through EHS.
3. If the equipment contains oil, the oil must be drained and collected for disposal as unwanted materials through EHS.
4. If the equipment or the laboratory surface were contaminated by biological agents, it is recommended to spray the affected area with a 10% bleach solution and allow it to soak for 15-20 minutes prior to the final wipe down.
5. Notify EHS of any equipment or procedures that may have contributed to hazardous **chemical residues remaining** on surfaces (e.g., perchloric acid) or any areas that cannot be fully decontaminated (e.g., material potentially containing asbestos).

Shipping:

1. Chemicals will not be shipped through EHS; outside vendors must be contacted to arrange legal shipments of such materials.
2. Radioactive material transfer must receive prior approval from the Radiation Safety Officer, and the destination must be licensed to receive it. All outstanding radioisotopes still in inventory must be accounted for prior to leaving. Please consult with the Radiation Safety Officer for assistance with shipping of radioactive materials.
3. All biological materials that need to be shipped or relocated must be packed and transported following the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) rules and regulations. Please contact EHS so that trained and certified personnel can assist you with the transportation of your biological materials.



## Laboratory Checkout/Intent to Vacate Form

This form shall be completed by the Principal Investigator or the designee and emailed directly to EHS at [ehs@uh.edu](mailto:ehs@uh.edu).

This is to officially notify the Environmental Health and Safety Department of intent to:

- Permanent closure of laboratory – laboratory shut down or PI leaving the institution
- Laboratory relocating within UH campus to [Building(s) & Laboratory Room(s) #]: \_\_\_\_\_

**PI and Laboratory Information:**

Vacating Principal Investigator’s Name (Last, First): \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Vacating laboratory locations [Building(s) & Laboratory Room(s)]: \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated date laboratories will be vacated: \_\_\_\_\_

| Checklist  | Completed                | Acknowledged and will proceed | Not Applicable           |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Chemicals</b>   |                          |                               |                          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify all hazardous chemicals for disposal, including investigation of unknown chemicals in all your laboratory locations, including the shared spaces.</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All hazardous chemicals in the chemical inventory are accounted for.</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If redistributing hazardous chemicals, contact EHS for proper procedures.</li> </ul>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm that all unwanted materials and surplus chemicals have been removed or waste pick-up request submitted. Be sure to check all drawers, cabinets, cupboards, refrigerators, etc.</li> </ul>                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean and decontaminate benchtops, furniture, other surfaces, laboratory hoods, storage cabinets, and other fixed equipment.</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Gas Cylinders/Lecture Bottles</b>   |                          |                               |                          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify contents of cylinder(s) even if “empty.”</li> </ul>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove regulators and manifolds. Secure and cap all cylinders and bottles.</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Return cylinder(s) to supplier(s).</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit a waste pick-up request for non-returnable bottles.</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Empty Containers and Glassware</b>  |                          |                               |                          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For empty containers that previously held chemicals that react with air or water to release toxic gas or cause an explosion, submit a waste removal request to EHS. Keep the container closed and labeled.</li> </ul> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>DEA Controlled Substances</b>   |                          |                               |                          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact EHS regarding destruction or disposal.</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If moving location, obtain approval from DEA prior to the move.</li> </ul>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Laser Equipment</b>   |                          |                               |                          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equipment is being transferred to another PI (name/location): _____</li> </ul>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |



| <b>Checklist (continued)</b>   | Completed                | Acknowledged and will proceed | Not Applicable           |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equipment is being moved to another location on campus:</li> </ul>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equipment is being relocated outside the University.</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The following equipment is being disposed of and the <a href="#">Laboratory Equipment Safety Clearance Form</a> should be filled and submit to EHS at <a href="mailto:ehs@uh.edu">ehs@uh.edu</a>.</li> </ul>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Radioactive Materials</b>   |                          |                               |                          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate and sort radioactive materials for moving or disposal.</li> </ul>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Package all surplus and waste radionuclides in approved and labeled waste containers.</li> </ul>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit a waste pick-up request for the radioactive materials.</li> </ul>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove all radioactive signs, stickers, postings, etc.</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Animal and Human Tissue</b>   |                          |                               |                          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dispose of research animal carcasses and tissue via UH/ACO approved methods. If tissues are in a preservative, submit a waste pick-up request.</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Microorganisms, Cultures, and rDNA</b>  |                          |                               |                          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate and sort biologicals into these categories: move, research materials to preserve, and waste.</li> </ul>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow protocol and UH procedures for on-site disposal of biological material and waste (e.g., disinfect, autoclave)</li> </ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clean and disinfect benchtops, furniture, other surfaces, biological safety cabinets, gloveboxes, storage cabinets, and other fixed equipment</li> </ul>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Laboratory Equipment</b>  |                          |                               |                          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For refrigerators, freezers, and other movable equipment that may be contaminated with chemicals, biologicals, or radiological materials, EHS must clear before they can be moved or given to surplus.</li> <li>Ensure <a href="#">Laboratory Equipment Safety Clearance Form</a> be filled and submit to EHS at <a href="mailto:ehs@uh.edu">ehs@uh.edu</a>.</li> </ul> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Principal Investigator’s Agreement**

I certify that I have reviewed the items listed on this checklist and will ensure that all necessary actions are completed in accordance with the guidelines before my departure date.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Investigator’s Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date:

**Department Head/Designee**

I am aware of the status of the laboratory(s) being vacated and I understand that I am responsible for the laboratory space and contents of the vacated laboratory(s).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Head’s/Designee’s Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: