

# Syracuse University

## A GUIDE FOR LABORATORY DECOMMISSIONING

For use by:  
Principal Investigators  
Laboratory Personnel

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### 1.0 Policy and Purpose

This guide provides a generic process to aid in the proper management of laboratory related hazardous materials, facilities and equipment during the transition of personnel and facilities. Transition of personnel may include: individuals separating entirely from the University and/or individuals vacating a laboratory space but remaining at the University. The term departing personnel, or derivations of, have been used to describe either of the above cases in this document.

Personnel departing a Syracuse University laboratory facility in which they have used, handled or stored hazardous materials must ensure the following: all research samples, solutions and/or other hazardous materials under their control must be properly disposed of or transferred to trained personnel prior to departure. Trained personnel are defined as individuals that have attended both the Chemical Hygiene and Hazardous Waste Management Manual training courses offered by the Environmental Health Office. Additionally, departing personnel must ensure that any equipment and/or facilities used in conjunction with hazardous materials have been appropriately decontaminated.

When used properly, this guide will help minimize hazards encountered when hazardous material use laboratories or personnel are in transition.

Additionally, this guide is intended to aid departing laboratory personnel such as graduate students or post doctorates and their respective departments in complying with the existing Chemical Clearance Policy found in the Hazardous Waste Management Manual (HWMM). Special attention is warranted for departing graduate level personnel since a greater potential exists for unlabelled or unwanted materials otherwise known as "Unknown" or "Orphaned" chemicals to be left behind and unattended.

Upon request, the Environmental Health Office is available to provide assistance and guidance in the decommissioning of laboratory spaces.

### 2.0 Decommissioning Procedure for Departing Principal Investigators and/or Supervisors

1. At least one month prior to departure, the P.I./Supervisor should review the necessary laboratory decommissioning tasks and requirements and perform an initial walk-through of the laboratory to identify issues that require action. This may be documented using the Laboratory Decommissioning Checklist

provided. Since the provided checklist may not be all encompassing, additional items should be noted on the checklist, as necessary, to ensure proper decommissioning.

2. Following the walk-through, the P.I./Supervisor should submit a copy of the checklist to the respective department chairperson and a copy to EHO (the checklist will indicate what actions by the P.I./Supervisor are required prior to departure).
3. As identified in the initial walk-through, the P.I./Supervisor must ensure that all tasks related to the proper disposition of research materials, equipment, facilities and supplies, including the identification and labeling of research samples and disposal or transfer of hazardous materials to authorized personnel have been completed.
4. The completion of any follow-up action(s) should be noted in the second column of the checklist. It is recommended that the P.I./Supervisor perform a final walk-through to ensure that all actions have been completed and documented. It is also recommended that the department chairperson walk through the laboratory being vacated to ensure decommissioning has been completed.
5. Following the final walk-through, the P.I./Supervisor should sign and submit the finalized checklist to the respective department chairperson and a copy to EHO at least one week before final departure.

In summary, the P.I./Supervisor should ensure complete laboratory decommissioning prior to their departure from the University. At a minimum, this should include the items listed in the Laboratory Decommissioning Checklist. If the P.I./Supervisor fails to complete a proper laboratory decommissioning, the responsibility will revert to the respective department. It is recommended that each department develop a plan to ensure the complete laboratory decommissioning by a departing P.I./Supervisor.

### **3.0 Decommissioning Procedure for Departing Laboratory Personnel**

1. In instances where the P.I./Supervisor will continue laboratory operations, but personnel under his or her supervision are departing (i.e. graduate students, post-doctorates), the guidance and checklist is recommended to be used to satisfy the requirements of the existing Chemical Clearance Policy.
2. At least one month prior to departure, the lab individual should meet with the P.I./Supervisor to review the necessary laboratory decommissioning tasks. The individual should perform an initial walk-through of the lab area to identify issues that require action. This may be documented using the Laboratory Decommissioning Checklist provided. Since the provided checklist may not be all encompassing, additional items should be noted on the checklist as necessary to ensure proper decommissioning.
3. As identified in the initial walk-through, the individual must ensure that all tasks related to the proper disposition of research materials, equipment, facilities and supplies, including the identification and labeling of research samples and disposal or transfer of hazardous materials to authorized personnel have been completed.
4. The completion of any follow-up action(s) should be noted in the second column of the checklist. Upon completion, the checklist should be submitted by the departing individual to the P.I./Supervisor for review. The P.I./Supervisor should walk through the area being vacated to ensure decommissioning has been completed and sign the finalized checklist.
5. The P.I./Supervisor should submit the signed and finalized checklist to the respective department chairperson at least one week before final departure of the individual.

**NOTE:** The Principal Investigator/Supervisor will assume responsibility, care and custody for all samples, chemicals, and unidentified materials that were not properly disposed or transferred by their laboratory personnel departing the University.