

# Laboratory Contingency Plan – Returning to the Laboratory

## A Note on Social Distancing

In the event researchers are returning to labs following the COVID-19 Pandemic, social distancing rules may still be in effect. Personal Protective Equipment (“PPE”) in this section refers to any face coverings that people are using to protect themselves from SARS-CoV-2.

- Staffing must be kept to a minimum while still providing for the safety of personnel reopening the laboratory
- Laboratory personnel should still be observing minimum distancing from other personnel within the space(s)
- Common / high-use touchpoints (countertops, equipment controls, hood sashes, door handles/knobs) should be cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis
- PPE should be used according to the most recent direction from the Office of the Vice President for Research
- PPE must be maintained as to prevent contamination with work materials (do not lay face coverings on contaminated surfaces, do not put PPE in pockets, do not handle PPE with potentially contaminated gloves, etc)
- Work shifts should be staggered to allow minimum occupancy at all times – use remote workstation assignments whenever possible to limit or at least minimize contact between laboratory personnel

*The focus should be to maximize space between personnel, and minimize contact time and the potential for cross-contamination. These guidelines are not exhaustive – each lab has its own operating environment and laboratory-specific considerations that should always be included.*

## Reopening the Laboratory

During extended shutdowns there may be hazardous situations that can occur without the knowledge of laboratory personnel. Prior to resuming laboratory operations it is advisable to conduct a walkthrough with the Building Manager, Principal Investigator, or other member of the laboratory to check for the following environmental hazards:

**Flooding** – caused by the activation of sprinklers during a smoke/fire condition, water source accidentally left open, containers which may have broken and spilled.

**Hazardous odors and vapors** – released from containers which may not have been sealed properly, or due to breakage of containers

**Energized equipment** – any equipment that was left plugged in may be on or energized – be cautious not to place your hands or other items within the working area of the equipment until it has been checked

**Spills or broken glass** – containers under pressure may have ruptured

If you encounter any of these hazards upon return to your lab do not remain in the lab – leave the area and call University Police at 1-631-632-3333 to report it and await assistance.

## Equipment

Check the equipment			
Task	Comments	Complete	N/A
Make sure nothing was left on top / in front / near moving parts that may get tangles or caught		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check wires and cables – make sure they are not broken or damaged and that they are connected correctly		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Look for cracks or other signs of damage. Damaged equipment should be put out of service until it can be repaired		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Look for service or maintenance dates which may have passed during your absence – equipment should be maintained according to manufacturer's recommendations		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make sure Bunsen burners are not connected to gas, and that all gas valves are fully closed		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check freezers and refrigerators – if power was lost, there may be water around the equipment, and samples may have been destroyed by lack of refrigeration		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Ensure adequate supplies</b>			
Task	Comments	Complete	N/A
Check reservoirs (oil, water, solvents) and ensure adequate supply		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make sure you have enough cleaning supplies for standard cleaning of work areas and surfaces		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Check all emergency equipment</b>			
Check to make sure fume hoods are on and not in alarm		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flush all plumbed eyewash stations until the water runs clear (caution – some stations do not have plumbed drains – make sure you have a means to capture water if this is the case)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check that fume hoods and biosafety cabinet certifications have not expired. If they have, contact Environmental Health and Safety ( <a href="mailto:LabSafety@stonybrook.edu">LabSafety@stonybrook.edu</a> ) to coordinate a fume hood check, or your contracted vendor for your biosafety cabinet. Do not use them if they are out of date.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Starting Experiments

Get Permission			
Task	Comments	Complete	N/A
Make sure you have written permission prior to starting any experiments		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make sure you have the appropriate training and that your existing training has not expired before working in the lab		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check kits and supplies			
Check expiration dates on kits that may have expired since last use		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check solvents, media, and other materials for signs of deterioration or contamination <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Highly hazardous materials, such as picric acid, should not be handled or moved if showing signs of drying out or discoloration. Evacuate the lab and contact University Police</li></ul>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check for adequate supply of fresh materials needed		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Coordinate with Support Areas			
Task	Comments	Complete	N/A
If your experiments require outside support (vendors for compressed gasses, Core Facilities, building services) – make sure those services will be available before beginning operation. Other services may experience interruptions or staffing shortages which you need to account for in scheduling		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure you have adequate containers for the collection and management of wastes from your experiments (chemical, biological, radioactive, etc)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Questions?**

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to Laboratory Safety staff in the Department of Environmental Health and Safety ([LabSafety@stonybrook.edu](mailto:LabSafety@stonybrook.edu)) or contact our Hazardous Waste Coordinator ([HazWaste@stonybrook.edu](mailto:HazWaste@stonybrook.edu)) if you need assistance with disposing of expired materials.

Completed By: \_\_\_\_\_

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