SMU Laboratory Decommissioning Procedure

SMU employees responsible for laboratory facilities and operations are required to follow this Laboratory Decommissioning Procedure prior to vacating any laboratory or other space where chemical, biological, or radioactive agents have been used or stored. Events requiring decommissioning of a laboratory include:

- Terminating affiliation with Southern Methodist University
- Relocating to another laboratory space
- Major laboratory renovation
- Retirement from research pursuits

The principal investigator, academic instructor, lab director/manager and graduate student are fully responsible for complying with all laboratory decommissioning requirements. In the event of death, disability, abrupt termination of employment, or other unplanned event, the department head/division director becomes responsible for implementing the decommissioning procedure. Department head/division director are additionally responsible for oversight of the decommissioning procedure and for certifying that a vacated laboratory space has been properly decommissioned.

Researchers who are vacating shared spaces shall ensure that this procedure is implemented for their portion of the lab space. Graduate research projects must follow this procedure to decommission research materials and dispose of waste prior to completion of work and before the thesis or dissertation is signed. Effective identification of research materials/waste and appropriate disposal should be an integral component of the educational process when dealing with hazardous materials.

Departments/Divisions may incur significant costs as a result of laboratories and research materials that have not been properly decommissioned. Departments/Divisions are responsible for any deficiencies not corrected by the individual responsible for laboratory facility and/or research materials. Any regulatory actions or fines resulting from improper management or disposal of any regulated material may also accrue to the department/division.

Step-By-Step Instructions

Hazardous Materials - Remove chemical, biological, and radiological agents prior to decommissioning. Be aware that numerous restrictions apply to the transfer of hazardous materials; EHS provides consultative assistance in the lawful transfer of these materials.

- Chemicals – Coordinate chemical waste disposal with EHS at least 30 days prior to decommissioning. Unopened and uncontaminated chemicals can be returned to departmental stockrooms or redistributed among colleagues.
- Compressed Gas Cylinders – Transfer to willing recipient, return to vendor, or dispose of as chemical waste.
- Biologicals – Dispose of biological wastes, potentially infectious materials, and sharps according to EHS procedures. Liquids can be decontaminated and poured down the drain. Coordinate with EHS for guidance on non-routine materials destruction.
- Radioisotopes, x-ray machines, or instruments containing a radioactive source – Coordinate with EHS or departmental Radiation Safety Officer (RSO) for disposal of waste or transfer of usable materials or equipment to another authorized user. All equipment must be cleared by RSO before sending to Surplus Property.

Remove Stored Items - Remove all glassware, laboratory research apparatus, empty containers, and other equipment. Storage areas, cabinets, and fume hoods must be completely emptied prior to decommissioning.

Clean and Decontaminate – Clean and decontaminate all laboratory surfaces, including those in fume hoods, biosafety cabinets, and chemical storage areas. General cleaning and chemical decontamination can be accomplished by washing with warm, soapy water. Further decontamination may be necessary for:

- Biologicals – Areas that may have been exposed to spills can be decontaminated with 20% bleach solution or other suitable disinfectant.
- Radioisotopes –Surfaces must be decontaminated and removal of surface contamination must be documented with wipe tests. Contact the departmental Radiation Safety Officer to perform final survey and certify that laboratory can be released for unrestricted use.
- Equipment – Decontaminate all accessible surfaces.
- Biosafety Cabinets – Wipe down all accessible surfaces (including the spill pan) with a suitable disinfectant.

Inspection – Schedule decommission inspection with EHS and the Department Chair. All deficiencies must be corrected before the laboratory can be certified as decommissioned. In radiological laboratories, the Radiation Safety Officer will need to inspect the lab and certify that the lab can be free-released for non-radiological use before the full decommissioning certification document is issued by the Department Head.

Recordkeeping – Department Chair retains original Decommissioning Form, with one copy to the PI, one copy to EHS, and one copy prominently posted in the decommissioned area. Additional documentation may be required for special regulated hazards such as radioactive or biological materials.

Exceptions – In situations where it is impractical or unwarranted to remove all stored items, including chemicals, the department chair and PI may agree to make exceptions to this requirement. Exceptions shall be documented on the exceptions page, signed by both parties, and posted with the Decommissioning Certification Form.

Questions on use of this procedure or form should be addressed to SMU Environmental Health and Safety.

SMU Laboratory Decommissioning Certification

Building:	Room Number(s):
PI/Lab Manager:	Phone Number:
Graduate Student:	Phone Number:

Items below should be checked for completion OR marked N/A for Not Applicable. Exceptions should be listed as noted.

Hazardous Materials

- ☐ Yes ☐ N/A Hazardous materials (chemicals, biologicals, radioactive materials) removed from area
- ☐ Yes ☐ N/A Hazardous materials removed from shared spaces (e.g., refrigerators, cold rooms)
- ☐ Yes ☐ N/A Wastes disposed of through EHS
- ☐ Yes ☐ N/A Unopened, uncontaminated chemicals returned to stockroom or transferred to authorized person
- ☐ Yes ☐ N/A Compressed gas cylinders returned to vendor, transferred, or disposed of as waste

Laboratory Equipment

- ☐ Yes ☐ N/A Glassware, equipment, apparatus, etc. removed from area
- ☐ Yes ☐ N/A Accessible surfaces cleaned and decontaminated

Decontamination/Clean-up

- ☐ Yes ☐ N/A Potentially contaminated lab surfaces and storage areas washed with soap and water
- ☐ Yes ☐ N/A Areas exposed to biological agents were decontaminated per SMU procedures
- ☐ Yes ☐ N/A Certification of radiological decontamination has been obtained from departmental RSO
- ☐ Yes ☐ N/A All excess materials and trash are removed and area is organized and free of clutter

Exceptions

- ☐ Yes ☐ N/A Addendum (attached) lists all exceptions to the decommissioning procedure for this lab

Student/Researcher Certification: I personally performed the decommissioning of this laboratory and certify it to be decommissioned in accordance with this procedure.

Signature _____ Date _____

Principal Investigator Certification: I personally performed or supervised the decommissioning of this laboratory and certify it to be decommissioned in accordance with this procedure.

Signature _____ Date _____

EHS Certification: I personally conducted the decommissioning review for this laboratory and certify it to be decommissioned in accordance with this procedure.

Signature _____ Date _____

Department Head Certification: I personally conducted the decommissioning review for this laboratory and certify it to be decommissioned in accordance with this procedure.

Signature _____ Date _____

Original retained by department chair | One copy to EHS | One copy posted in decommissioned lab | One copy to PI