

GW Laboratory Ramp-Down Checklist

In the event of a significant disruption to lab functions, the following checklist will help investigators ramp-down research activities in a safe and efficient manner. The checklist is intended to complement the continuity plans that principal investigators have already developed.

This checklist may not address every consideration for every lab. Please contact the Office of Laboratory Safety at labsafety@gwu.edu or the Office of Health and Emergency Management at safety@gwu.edu with questions about how to secure hazards or safely suspend research operations in your laboratory.

Preparing

Item	Complete or N/A	Notes
Identify all non-critical activities that can be ramped-down, curtailed, suspended or delayed.		
Identify primary and backup personnel able to safely perform essential activities.		

Communications

Item	Complete or N/A	Notes
Create a contact list of lab personnel, principal investigator, lab administrative director, research operations manager and building manager. Include home and cell phone numbers.		
Ensure the contact list is saved where it can be remotely accessed by everyone in the lab.		
Test your phone tree or email group to facilitate emergency communication amongst lab researchers and staff.		
Ensure that Hazard Communication Sheet is up to date with hazards and emergency contacts listed and posted on outside of lab doors.		

Shipping/Receiving

Item	Complete or N/A	Notes
Limit new orders to items needed to support minimal critical functions.		
If possible, cancel orders for non-essential research materials that have not been shipped.		
Plan ahead for any ongoing biological shipments, both on the shipping and receiving end.		
Contact loading dock/mail services personnel to notify them of any expected incoming shipments.		
Plan ahead for any dry ice shipments and ensure they are properly stored.		

Research Materials

Item	Complete or N/A	Notes
Freeze down any biological stock material for long-term storage.		
Consolidate storage of valuable perishable items within storage units that have backup systems.		
Fill dewars and cryogen containers for sample storage and critical equipment.		
Consult with OAR about current animal care recommendations. OAR can be reached at iacuc@gwu.edu		
Secure all hazardous materials in long-term storage. Label and securely cap every container.		
Ensure all flammables are stored in flammable storage cabinets.		
Ensure that all items are labeled appropriately. All working stocks of materials must be labeled with the full name of its contents and include hazards.		
Remove all chemicals and glassware from benchtops and fume hoods and store in cabinets or appropriate shelving.		
Request chemical waste pickup for peroxide forming compounds or other chemicals that may become unstable over time.		
Collect contents of any acid/base baths and request waste pickup.		
Remove infectious materials from biosafety cabinets, and autoclave, disinfect, or safely store them as appropriate.		

Confirm inventory of controlled substances (including syringes and needles) and toxins of biological origin. Document in logbook.		
Secure controlled substances according to DEA regulations. Consider additional measures to restrict access to controlled substances.		
Secure physical hazards such as sharps.		
Secure radioactive materials. If you need to transfer RAM to another location, please contact OLS at labsafety@gwu.edu .		

Physical Hazards

Item	Complete or N/A	Notes
Close gas valves. If possible, shut off gas to area.		
Turn off appliances, equipment, and computers. Unplug if possible.		
Secure gas cylinders and store in upright position. Remove regulators and use caps.		
Plan for management of non-essential cryogenically cooled equipment like cryostats.		
Protect against flooding from broken pipes. Elevate chemicals, materials, supplies, equipment, electrical wires, off of the floor.		
Check that equipment requiring uninterrupted electrical power is connected to an Uninterrupted Power Supply and/or emergency power.		

Equipment

Item	Complete or N/A	Notes
Prepare equipment if routine upkeep is required		
Check that refrigerator, freezer, and incubator doors are tightly closed.		
Biosafety cabinets: surface decontaminate the inside work area, close the sash and turn off the power. Do NOT leave the UV light on.		
Fume hoods: Clear the hood of all hazards, allowing for proper airflow and shut the sash.		
Review proper shut down procedures and measures to prevent an electrical surge.		
Shut down and unplug sensitive electrical equipment.		

Decontamination

Item	Complete or N/A	Notes
Decontaminate/sanitize areas of the lab as you would do routinely at the end of the day.		
Decontaminate/sanitize and clean any reusable materials.		
Document a contamination survey if you have a radioactive material permit for unsealed material.		

Waste Management

Item	Complete or N/A	Notes
Collect and label all hazardous chemical waste in satellite accumulation areas (SAAs). Segregate incompatible chemicals (e.g., in plastic secondary bins or trays).		
Request for chemical hazardous waste to be collected.		
Biological waste: Disinfect and empty aspirator collection flasks.		
Properly dispose of all biological waste in biohazardous waste boxes. Live cells, cultures, frozen stocks, etc. must be autoclaved or chemically inactivated with freshly prepared 10% bleach for 30 minutes prior to disposal.		
Collect radioactive waste in appropriate waste containers. Contact OLS at labsafety@gwu.edu or 4-2630 to request removal.		
Discard unwanted, non-hazardous chemicals. Refer to HEMS guidance for proper disposal.		

Security

Item	Complete or N/A	Notes
Lock all entrances to the lab. Ensure key personnel supporting critical functions have access.		
Close all windows.		
Secure lab notebooks and other data.		
Take laptops home.		
If DEA/DCDOH Controlled Substances are needed during wind-down or animal emergencies, ensure that those performing the essential tasks are authorized and know how to access.		

General Area

Item	Complete or N/A	Notes
Remove all perishable and open food items from the lab's break areas, lockers, and personal spaces.		
Perform general housekeeping.		