Laboratory ramp-up guidelines

This document provides guidance in how to safely resume operations after a partial or total closure of campus laboratories. ASU Safety Partners has developed guidelines and training to assist the university during the COVID-19 pandemic. Contact ASU Safety Partners at safetypartners@asu.edu if you need assistance.

Entering the laboratory for the first time?

Conduct a safety walkthrough and complete a laboratory safety self-inspection. Ensure the following items are addressed before resuming operations:

- Assess chemicals that may have become unstable during the laboratory ramp-down and manage any expired, outdated, peroxide-forming, self-reactive, or other reagents with a limited lifespan in accordance with manufacturer's Safety Data Sheets.
- Check equipment that may have been affected by a power disruption to ensure it still has electricity and other utilities.
- Conduct an inventory of hazardous materials to ensure no loss of material. Special consideration should be given to biologicals, chemicals, radioactive materials, toxins and controlled substances. Report any inconsistencies to your Principal Investigator or supervisor immediately.
- Confirm chemical fume hoods, biosafety cabinets, glove boxes, gas, cabinets, gas detection monitors, freezers and other engineering controls are operating as normal.
- Confirm fire extinguishers are available and indicator is in operating range.
- Confirm that spill kits and first aid kits are still available and stocked.
- Disinfect benches, centrifuges, refrigerators, freezers, and other commonly touched handles and surfaces.
- Ensure adequate Personal Protective Equipment, or PPE, is available for laboratory personnel. Be prepared for supply chain disruptions and limited availability of materials. Laboratory operations involving the use of hazardous materials and processes must not be conducted without proper PPE. Follow routine processes for purchasing personal protective equipment (e.g., through Business Operations Managers or other staff who purchase these items).
- Flush eyewash stations for three to five minutes to remove sediment and stagnant water and document on the activation log. Report problems to Facilities Management.
- Identify and address any local alarms indicating a safety issue.
- Inspect refrigerators, freezers and flammable cabinets for evidence of broken containers, waste, leaks or failed equipment.
- Mitigate any leaks or spills or call ASU Safety Partners at 480-965-1823 for assistance.
- Pour water down dry traps and floor drains to mitigate sewer odors.
- Reference the ASU coronavirus website for the latest updates and FAQs.
- Review and implement social distancing guidelines.
- Review any manufacturer's equipment manuals for safe startup instructions.
- Review startup procedures and SOPs for any compressed gas cylinders and/or gas distribution systems.
- Submit a pickup request for any unwanted hazardous materials or hazardous waste.

Other considerations

- Be prepared for delays in ordering materials for conducting research and teaching activities. There will be high demand for PPE and other laboratory supplies.
- Complete the Laboratory Ramp-Up Checklist for research and teaching activities that may have partially or completely ramped down.
- Be prepared to ramp-down labs again if the pandemic conditions change. A Laboratory Ramp-Down Guidance and Checklist is available for your assistance.
- Review Lab SOP's for particularly hazardous substances. Laboratory personnel may be tempted to hurry or rush to make up for lost time. This is when accidents are most common.
- Personnel should increase frequency of cleaning and disinfecting commonly used surfaces. A list of recommended disinfectants is available at epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2.

Questions? Contact ASU Environmental Health and Safety
at 480-965-1823 or email SafetyPartners@asu.edu.

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