



Transitioning a Laboratory or Equipment

Helpful Steps for Transitioning or Closing a Laboratory

Each faculty member in charge of a laboratory is responsible for appropriate disposal of all unwanted materials, and for ensuring that rooms are clean and safe for the next occupants of the lab. Outlined below are suggested steps for successful shutdown or transition of a Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine lab, including equipment and instrumentation. Please also be reminded that faculty should inform division or departmental administrators early in the process to ensure that all internal and external vendor accounts for the lab are closed and that all standing orders for lab supplies are cancelled.

General Recommendations

- Cancel (or reschedule) all standing orders such as media, glassware, animals, chemicals, and gas cylinders.
- Empty and clean all equipment before packing and/or moving.
- Properly dispose of material you no longer use or need. For advice on removing surplus equipment, contact your division or department administrator. For advice on removing unwanted chemicals, contact Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) at 410-955-5918.
- Work with laboratory staff to clean all potentially contaminated surfaces thoroughly. This includes chemical fume hoods (work surfaces as well as the storage area under the hood), bench tops, shelves, refrigerators, centrifuges, balances and other instruments. Dried, spilled chemicals are still hazardous and may even be explosive. Please note that investigators are responsible for disposal of materials from laboratories as outlined here: https://hpo.johnshopkins.edu/hse/policies/156/11009/policy_11009.pdf?_af=0.00558980786469. If an investigator does not have personnel to assist with the cleanup, there are outside vendors such as Clean Harbors that can assist, but they can be quite expensive.
- Remove regulators from all compressed gas cylinders; replace the safety caps. Arrange for the pickup of empty cylinders.

Principal investigators must be sure that all hazardous conditions have been properly addressed before laboratory areas are vacated. Contact your division or departmental administrator if you have questions about closing or relocating a lab. Contact HSE for advice about specific safety concerns.

Biological Safety

- All biohazardous materials (microbial agents, toxins, infected animals, human specimens, etc.) must be properly packaged, contained and moved by trained laboratory staff. A DOT-licensed hazardous materials carrier, not the movers, must be used if these materials are to be transported over public thoroughfares. Division or departmental administrators should be contacted to assist with any biological samples, materials or equipment that will be moved to the lab area of a faculty member accepting those materials.
- All biological safety cabinets must be decontaminated before a faculty member vacates a lab and the cabinets need to be certified before being used at the new location (if they are moved). Call 410-955-5918 to notify the biosafety officer at least two weeks before closing the lab to make arrangements for the decontamination and certification services.
- If your laboratory has been doing recombinant DNA research, or works with potentially infectious agents and/or materials, registration documents will have to be amended. If the plan is to move agents to another lab, it must be approved for the appropriate biosafety level. Call the biosafety officer at 410-955-5918.

Chemical Safety

- Laboratory personnel are responsible for proper packaging of all chemicals. Incompatible chemicals must not be placed together. Boxes must be securely taped, particularly the bottom. Do not overload the boxes. Label boxes appropriately.
- Consider special requirements for certain chemicals (e.g., refrigeration, desiccated storage, etc.).
- Highly toxic materials, potential carcinogens, highly reactive chemicals, controlled drugs and other restricted-access chemicals should be disposed or redistributed to other labs only by trained laboratory staff. A DOT-licensed hazardous materials carrier must be used if those materials are to be transported on public roads.
- The transport of hazardous materials, which includes most chemicals used in the lab, is highly regulated. If you are shipping chemicals to a new lab, contact HSE for guidance: 410-955-5918. In most cases, the chemicals must be packaged for transport in DOT-approved containers by people who are trained to ship chemicals. The in-house training provided by HSE only applies to the shipment of biological materials, not chemicals. So, you will most likely have to employ a contractor to package and ship any chemical reagents.
- All chemicals and solutions must be removed from the vacated area. Consider giving excess chemicals to your coworkers who may need them after providing an inventory of chemicals to HSE for review and approval. (It costs a lot less to give them away than to have them treated as waste.) Call HSE (410-955-5918) for advice or to make arrangements for chemical pickup.

Radiation Safety

- All radioactive materials must be removed from the laboratory. For answers to general radiological questions and to arrange to have your laboratory cleared (not cleaned) by Radiation Control, call 410-955-3712 to arrange

for a termination survey. All radioactive isotope warning signs are to be removed by the investigator after the laboratory has been certified as free of contamination by Radiation Control.

- Call 410-955-3712 for radiological waste pickup. The investigator's inventory must document any transfers or disposal of radioactive isotopes.
- Instruments, freezers, refrigerators or other equipment used for radioactive materials must be emptied of these materials and decontaminated before being moved. Radioactive warning signs are to be removed after testing to ensure decontamination.
- Radioactive material that may be moved to a new laboratory must be labeled regarding contents, packed to ensure containment in the event of spills or damage, and shielded appropriately. All radioactive materials must be packed and moved by trained laboratory staff, NOT the movers.

Equipment Transfer and Disposal

- Equipment or instrumentation that is identified for disposal or transfer to another lab will need to be wiped down and cleaned with a 10 percent bleach solution or other appropriate disinfectant for the agent(s) in use and HSE should be contacted (410-955-5918) to clear the removal or transfer.
- Your divisional or department administrator should alert the JHU Fixed Assets Office of all equipment transfers or disposals: 410-997-5749 / <http://ssc.jhmi.edu/fixedassets/index.html>. Disposal or transfer of equipment requires a completed JHU Transfer or Disposal Form, which can be found here: http://ssc.jhmi.edu/fixedassets/DataFiles/Transfer_Disposal_Form.pdf
- Once equipment is cleaned and approved for disposal, a work order can be requested through facworkrequest@jhmi.edu for maintenance to pick up the equipment for disposal. Depending on the size of the equipment, outside movers may be required in certain cases.
- Approval to move lab equipment to a new institution depends on factors such as the funds used to purchase the equipment and whether the instrumentation is needed for ongoing research at JHU. Normally, only equipment purchased from active grants receives approval for transfer. Exceptions may be granted to move equipment that would normally remain at JHU if it is not needed at JHU and there is adequate compensation to Johns Hopkins via equipment trades or purchase for the value of the equipment. Investigators seeking to transfer equipment should prepare a list of equipment to be relocated and forward the list to his/her department/division director, who will make a recommendation to the cognizant research dean. The research dean will consider the recommendation of the department director in reviewing proposed exceptions. Refer to the ORA Handbook for further guidance: http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/research/resources/offices-policies/ora/handbook/handbook_V_g.html#a6.

For any questions not addressed above, please call HSE at 410-955-5918.