



Laboratory Decommissioning or “Close Out” Policy and Procedure at Tufts University

The purpose of this Policy is to prevent “abandoned laboratories.”

An abandoned laboratory is a laboratory or support area in which hazardous materials were used or in which hazardous materials are left when laboratory work is stopped and the laboratory staff has left the University. The costs of making an abandoned laboratory safe for re-occupancy by new users are very high.

Abandoned laboratories are prevented by early, frequent and clear communications among the Principal Investigator, laboratory staff, department chairpersons or managers, Tufts EHS, and Tufts Facilities Services.

Decommissioning or close-out is the process of making a laboratory, laboratory support areas, common areas and walk-in refrigerators, freezers and incubators safe for any future use.

The role of the **Principal Investigator** and the laboratory staff is **critical** in defining the types of hazardous materials used in the laboratory and the potential for contamination of a) moveable equipment that remains in the area, b) fixed equipment (fume hood, biosafety cabinet, freezers, and walk-in units), and c) room surfaces (benches, cabinets, shelves, walls and floors). Hence, the decommissioning process must begin at least 30 days before the PI and the staff leave the laboratory.

In the absence of accurate information regarding hazardous materials and potential for contamination, the **worst case** must be assumed and conservative precautions taken.

The four critical groups essential to perform laboratory decommissioning are:

1. Current PI and laboratory staff
2. Department Chair, Manager or designee
3. Tufts Environmental Health and Safety (TEHS) Specialist
4. Tufts Facilities Services staff

- Step 1.** PI, lab staff or department chair must notify Tufts EHS that a laboratory will be closing due to relocation to an on- or off-campus facility, retirements, or other reason, and the date when laboratory work will STOP.
- Step 2.** TEHS Specialist will contact laboratory staff and complete a Decommissioning Action Checklist. This is a list of actions and responsible persons that must be completed and endorsed respectively before the laboratory is deemed safe for re-occupancy and move-in by new users.
- Step 3.** TEHS Specialist will notify the Tufts EHS Biosafety, Chemical Safety, Hazardous Waste, and Radiation Specialists of the decommissioning, and these individuals will audit the conditions and take whatever actions necessary to make the laboratory safe for new users.
- Step 4.** Any extraordinary costs associated with the laboratory decommissioning and move-out will be the responsibility of the department and the PI or the PI's new organization. A common extraordinary cost is the shipment of hazardous biological, chemical and radioactive waste to a new location.
- Warning:** Standard moving firms are generally not authorized to move hazardous materials or equipment contaminated with hazardous materials.
- Step 5.** When all decommissioning actions have been completed and documented, each TEHS Specialist will sign off on the Checklist posted in each laboratory area. EACH ROOM or AREA has its own decommissioning sign off form.



**Environmental Health and Safety
Laboratory and Laboratory Support Area Close-Out Form**

NOTE: This form must be completed by the Principal Investigator, the laboratory staff, or the department chairperson or manager immediately following a decision to close, relocate, move or otherwise decommission a laboratory or laboratory support area.

Tufts Campus (select): Boston Grafton Medford

Principal Investigator: _____

Department: _____

Lab Staff: _____

Building: _____

Room(s): _____

Today's Date: _____

Date When Work Stops: _____

Date When Lab Must be Available for New Users: _____

Check all hazardous materials used or produced in the laboratory:

Radioactive materials: _____

Toxic chemicals (poisons) NFPA Health rating 3 or 4: _____

Flammable or reactive chemicals NFPA rating 3 or 4: _____

Biological materials: _____

Controlled substances: _____

Compressed gas cylinders: _____

Hazardous chemical waste (satellite accumulation area): _____

Send this form to the TEHS Specialist on each campus or notify that individual located at:

Boston: Posner Hall, 200 Harrison Avenue, Boston, MA 02111

Grafton: Central Services/Campus Police, 7 Jumbo's Path, North Grafton, MA 01536

Medford: Dowling Hall, 419 Boston Avenue, Medford, MA 02155