

BACK-TO-LAB CHECK-LIST

The following guide will assist researchers in their preparations for bringing their research laboratories back online from a temporary shutdown.

Make Sure

- Before resuming research activities, make sure your research group has a “back to work” plan. Research group plans should be designed with the PI and approved by the cognizant Division in consultation with EHS.
- Avoid engaging in startup procedures alone, while still practice physical distancing. Try to have at least two people present in case any issue arises. Have a general planned schedule of when certain processes should be back up and running.
- Take things cautiously slow as your research ramps back up. Accidents are more likely to occur if a lab rushes back into research.

First Day Back

- ☐ Prior to restarting any research, perform a complete and thorough walkthrough of all spaces for which you are responsible. Check that nothing is obviously out of place, missing, damaged, leaking, etc. Address these issues immediately.
- ☐ Ensure you have adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) available for near-term planned research.
- ☐ Ensure you have adequate hand soap and towels for washing hands. Ensure you have adequate disinfectant appropriate for cleaning lab surfaces and equipment.
 - We recommend designating a sink, near the exit of the lab, to be the hand-washing sink.
 - Make sure the sink is clear of lab dishes and other research equipment.
- ☐ Complete an inventory of lab supplies. Be aware that many items may be in short supply or have longer lead times. This includes gas cylinders, chemicals, and PPE. Schedule deliveries of research materials in smaller quantities and expect delays.
- ☐ Verify all emergency equipment is accessible and functioning, including eyewashes, safety showers, sprinkler heads, fire extinguishers, and pull stations. Ensure that they are visible and unobstructed.
- ☐ Check chemical and biological containers for damage, leaks, or pressure build up.
 - EHS has been performing biological and chemical waste pick-ups.
 - If extra waste pick-up is needed, you can request waste pickup using the AIM system.

- ☐ Power up electrical equipment slowly and one at a time to avoid overloading electrical circuits.
- ☐ Verify that the chemical fume hoods have an EHS sticker reflecting current certifications. Test hoods to ensure that sashes can be raised up with one hand to the mechanical stop or 18-inch vertical opening without going into alarm. If the hood does not have a flow monitoring device, check airflow by using a tissue to see if it is sufficiently drawn inward.
- ☐ Pour small amounts of water down dry traps and floor drains. Run all water faucets for a few minutes to mitigate sewer gas smells, which can be confused for natural gas leaks.
- ☐ Turn water back on slowly. Check water connections for leaks. Do not leave the site right away as some connections may burst after a few minutes. Return to the equipment a short time later to confirm there are no leaks. Immediately report all leaks.
- ☐ Check all refrigerators and freezers to make sure they are still operating properly.
- ☐ Any closed environment is likely to have accumulated condensation, and mold growth may have resulted. Check all incubators, shakers, ovens, refrigerated units for accumulation of condensation or signs of mold growth. Inspect inside of the unit, gaskets and corners, and clean as necessary.
- ☐ Check that all utilities are operational for your research needs. This includes house vacuum and plumbed gases.

Specific Considerations for Biological Labs

- ☐ Verify that biosafety cabinets have not gone out of certification during the shutdown period. If your BSC certification is out of date contact certifying company.
- ☐ Ensure you have sharps containers available before beginning work.
- ☐ Ensure appropriate disinfectants for your biological work are available.
- ☐ Verify your CO₂ supply before beginning use of incubators.
- ☐ Check your sterile media, aqueous buffers stocks to ensure they have not spoiled.

Specific Considerations for Chemical Labs

- ☐ Before beginning work, ensure you have hazardous waste containers available.
- ☐ As you begin setting up the lab, maintain separation of non-compatible substances (e.g. oxidizers and flammable gases, acids and bases or flammables).
- ☐ Ensure all compressed gas cylinders are chained and secured.

- ☐ Review start-up procedures for any compressed gas cylinders, gas generation stations, and gas distribution systems.
- ☐ Before using consider leak-testing compressed gas piping systems.

Specific Considerations for Radioactive Materials

- ☐ Verify all survey equipment are operating normally. Contact Radiation Safety at x6727 for any survey equipment problems.
- ☐ Perform a survey of the lab before beginning work and contact Radiation Safety if contamination is found.
- ☐ Perform an inventory check and if any material cannot be accounted for, contact Radiation Safety office.

Equipment

- ☐ Review equipment manuals to locate equipment start-up procedures.
- ☐ Verify that “Laser in Use” lights, door interlocks, or other safety related controls are still operational.
- ☐ Verify cryogen supply. Contact cryogen suppliers to make any special delivery changes necessary.
- ☐ Before reconnecting to power, verify heat sources do not have damaged cords (includes, but not limited: hot plates, ovens, heat blocks, sterilizers, water baths).