



# NMSU Laboratory Decommissioning Procedure



NMSU Environmental Health & Safety  
<http://safety.nmsu.edu>

NMSU employees responsible for laboratory facilities and operations are required to follow this Laboratory Decommissioning Procedure prior to vacating any laboratory or other space where chemical, biological, or radioactive agents have been used or stored. Events requiring decommissioning of a laboratory include:

- Terminating affiliation with New Mexico State University
- Relocating to another laboratory space
- Major laboratory renovation
- Retirement from research pursuits

The principal investigator, academic instructor, lab director/manager and graduate student are fully responsible for complying with all laboratory decommissioning requirements. In the event of death, disability, abrupt termination of employment, or other unplanned event, the department head/division director becomes responsible for implementing the decommissioning procedure. Department head/division director are additionally responsible for oversight of the decommissioning procedure and for certifying that a vacated laboratory space has been properly decommissioned. Researchers who are vacating shared spaces shall ensure that this procedure is implemented for their portion of the lab space. Graduate research projects must follow this procedure to decommission research materials and dispose of waste prior to completion of work and before the thesis or dissertation is signed. Effective identification of research materials/waste and appropriate disposal should be an integral component of the educational process when dealing with hazardous materials.

Departments/Divisions may incur significant costs as a result of laboratories and research materials that have not been properly decommissioned. Departments/Divisions are responsible for any deficiencies not corrected by the individual responsible for laboratory facility and/or research materials. Any regulatory actions or fines resulting from improper management or disposal of any regulated material may also accrue to the department/division.

## Step-By-Step Instructions

**Hazardous Materials** - Remove chemical, biological, and radiological agents prior to decommissioning. Be aware that numerous restrictions apply to the transfer of hazardous materials; EH&S provides consultative assistance in the lawful transfer of these materials.

- **Chemicals** – Coordinate chemical waste disposal with EH&S Hazardous Waste Management (646-3327) at least 30 days prior to decommissioning. Unopened and uncontaminated chemicals can be returned to departmental stockrooms, transferred to temporary storage, or redistributed among colleagues.
- **Compressed Gas Cylinders** – Transfer to willing recipient, return to vendor, or dispose of as chemical waste.
- **Biologicals** – Dispose of biological wastes, potentially infectious materials, and sharps according to University policy. Liquids can be decontaminated and poured down the drain. Coordinate with Biosafety Officer in Research Compliance (646-4463) for guidance on non-routine materials destruction.
- **Radioisotopes, x-ray machines or instruments containing a radioactive source** – Coordinate with EH&S Radiation Safety Officer (RSO) for disposal of waste or transfer of usable materials or equipment to another

authorized user. All equipment must be cleared by RSO before sending to Surplus Property .

- **Controlled Substances** – Dispose of as waste or transfer to another qualified and licensed individual.
- **Select Agents** – Strict federal regulations apply to the destruction and/or transfer of Select Agents. Contact Biosafety Officer in Research Compliance for guidance.

**Remove Stored Items** - Remove all glassware, laboratory research apparatus, empty containers, and other equipment. Storage areas, cabinets, and fume hoods must be completely emptied prior to decommissioning.

**Clean and Decontaminate** – Clean and decontaminate all laboratory surfaces, including those in fume hoods, biosafety cabinets, and chemical storage areas. General cleaning and chemical decontamination can be accomplished by washing with warm, soapy water. Further decontamination may be necessary for:

- **Biologicals** – Areas that may have been exposed to spills can be decontaminated with 1:10 bleach solution or other suitable disinfectant.
- **Radioisotopes** – Surfaces must be decontaminated to the levels specified in the NMSU Radiation Safety Manual. Document removal of surface contamination with wipe tests. Contact the Radiation Safety Officer in EH&S (646-3327) to perform final survey and certify that laboratory can be released for unrestricted use.
- **Equipment** – Decontaminate all accessible surfaces. Affix Equipment Release Form to equipment that will be shipped or sent to Surplus.
- **Biosafety Cabinets** – Wipe down all accessible surfaces (including the spill pan) with a suitable disinfectant. Some agents may necessitate a formaldehyde gas decon of the filter and inner surfaces; contact Biosafety Officer in Research Compliance (646-4463) for guidance.

**Inspection** – Schedule decommission inspection with Department Chair and provide necessary EH&S certifications. All deficiencies must be corrected before the laboratory can be certified as decommissioned. In radiological laboratories, the Radiation Safety Officer will need to inspect the lab and certify that the lab can be free-released for non-radiological use before the full decommissioning certification document is issued by the Department Head.

**Recordkeeping** – Department Chair retains original Decommissioning Form, with one copy to the PI, one copy to EH&S, and one copy prominently posted in the decommissioned area. Additional documentation may be required for special regulated hazards such as radioactive or biological materials.

**Exceptions** -In situations where it is impractical or unwarranted to remove all stored items, including chemicals, the department chair and PI may agree to make exceptions to this requirement. Exceptions shall be documented on the exceptions page, signed by both parties, and posted with the Decommissioning Certification Form.

Questions on use of this procedure or form should be addressed to NMSU Environmental Health & Safety

# NMSU Decommissioning Certification

Building:	Room Number:
PI/Lab Manager:	Phone Number:
Graduate Student:	Phone Number:

Items below should be checked for completion, marked N/A for not applicable or list the exception.

### Hazardous Materials

- Yes    NA   Hazardous materials (chemicals, biological agents, radioactive materials) removed from area  
 Yes    NA   Hazardous materials removed from shared spaces (e.g., refrigerators, cold rooms)  
 Yes    NA   Wastes disposed of through EH&S  
 Yes    NA   Unopened, uncontaminated chemicals return to stockroom or transferred to authorized person  
 Yes    NA   Compressed gas cylinders returned to vendor, transferred, or disposed of as waste  
 Yes    NA   EH&S approved transfer of hazardous materials outside NMSU  
 Yes    NA   Controlled Substances destroyed, disposed of, or transferred to licensed individual

### Laboratory Equipment

- Yes    NA   Glassware, equipment, apparatus, etc., removed from area  
 Yes    NA   Accessible surfaces cleaned and decontaminated  
 Yes    NA   Equipment Release Form affixed to equipment shipped outside NMSU or sent to Surplus

### Decontamination / Clean-up

- Yes    NA   Potentially contaminated lab surfaces and storage areas washed with soap and water  
 Yes    NA   Areas exposed to biological agents were decontaminated per NMSU Biosafety Manual  
 Yes    NA   Certification of radiological decontamination has been obtained from EH&S RSO  
 Yes    NA   All excess materials and trash are removed and area is organized and free of clutter

### Exceptions

- Yes    NA   Addendum [attached] lists all exceptions to the decommissioning procedure for lab.

**Student/ Researcher Certification:** *I personally performed the decommissioning of this laboratory and certify it to be decommissioned in accordance with this procedure.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Graduate student signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Principal Investigator Certification:** *I personally performed or supervised the decommissioning of this laboratory and certify it to be decommissioned in accordance with this procedure.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Investigator/Lab Manager signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Department Head Certification:** *I personally conducted the decommissioning review for this laboratory and certify it to be decommissioned in accordance with this procedure.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Head/Division Director signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**EH&S Certification:** *I personally conducted the decommissioning review for this laboratory and certify it to be decommissioned in accordance with this procedure.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Environmental Health & Safety Representative signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

- Original retained by the Department
- Copy forwarded to Environmental Health & Safety (MSC 3578) or email to [ehs@nmsu.edu](mailto:ehs@nmsu.edu)
- Copy prominently posted in decommissioned lab or sent to Principal Investigator/Lab Manager