

SUNY Cortland – Environmental Health and Safety Office

Work Area Close-out Procedures and Guidelines

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Work Area Close-out Procedures and Guidelines

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I. Introduction

This document outlines work area close-out procedures and guidelines for when an employee retires, resigns, moves to another campus location, or goes on sabbatical. These procedures and guidelines apply to laboratories, animal rooms, studios, workshops, offices, and other campus-owned locations. The objectives of this document are: 1) promote a safe work environment; 2) reduce hazardous waste generation; 3) ensure responsibility for all materials used in the workplace; and 4) comply with regulatory requirements. While the procedures and guidelines in this document apply principally to employees, there may be situations that apply to students and visitors.

The following SUNY Cortland programs and documents are relevant to work area closeout:

1. Chemical Hygiene Plan;
2. Department Hazard Assessments;
3. Hazard Communication Program;
4. Personal Protective Equipment Program;
5. Spill Clean-up Policy; and
6. Waste Management Program.

With the exception of Department Hazard Assessments, these documents can be retrieved at the Environmental Health and Safety Office Web page.

II. Close-out Procedures

Prior to leaving the campus, employees are requested to complete the Work Area Close-Out Checklist available on page 6 of this document and send it to the Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) Office. Since work area close-out can be time consuming, it should be initiated as early as possible prior to leaving the campus.

Close-out procedures and guidelines for the following are outlined in this section: biological materials; biological safety cabinets; specimens; compressed gas cylinders; freezers/refrigerators; chemicals; hazardous waste; glassware; equipment; keys; general workplace clean-up; and EH&S Office inspections. Important note: appropriate personal protective equipment must be worn when cleaning, and handling chemicals and biological substances. Information and guidance on personal protective equipment and personal protective equipment selection are found in SUNY Cortland's Personal Protective Equipment Program and department-specific hazard assessments.

Biological Materials

- Wipe down all surfaces with a 10 percent bleach solution or 70 percent alcohol solution. All surfaces are to be saturated with solution for a minimum of 30 minutes. If a 70 percent alcohol solution is used, care must be exercised to remove all ignition sources.
- Place all sharps, including syringes, Pasteur pipettes, and razor blades in a sharps container and dispose of as Regulated Medical Waste. Contact the biology technician or the EH&S Office at extension 2508 for more information.
- Dispose of all regulated medical waste, related contaminated supplies and any other biohazardous waste in red bags.
- Decontaminate all liquid media and non-Regulated Medical Waste by autoclaving or by treating for 30 minutes with a 10 percent bleach solution.

Biological Safety Cabinets (BSC)

- Remove all contents.
- Disconnect tissue culture media vacuum flask.
- Decontaminate all accessible surfaces with an appropriate disinfectant.
- If the BSC is to be moved to another area, it must be decontaminated by a certified contractor before relocation. Note: biological safety cabinets must also be recertified when moved to another location.
- Contact the EH&S Office at extension 2508 regarding surface decontamination.

Specimens

- Specimens must be separated from formaldehyde or formalin solutions. Formaldehyde and formalin solution must be handled as hazardous waste.
- Do not dispose of specimens down the drain.
- Double bag animal specimens and dispose of waste in an outside dumpster (Note: red bags must not be used).
- Human specimens must be disposed of as Regulated Medical Waste.

Compressed Gas Cylinders

- Remove the regulator.
- Replace the cylinder cap.
- Return the cylinder to a storage area by using a hand cart (contact the department technician for assistance, if necessary).
- Dispose of lecture bottles as hazardous waste.

Freezers/Refrigerators

- Inventory all chemicals by using the Chemical Inventory Sheet in Section IV.
- Contact the EH&S Office at extension 2508 to dispose of unused or unwanted chemicals.
- Clean up all spills and residues.
- Clean all surfaces, including the door handle.
- Ensure the refrigerator/freezer is empty prior to shutting off and unplugging.

Chemicals

- Return unused or unwanted chemicals to the department technician or a central storage area. Do not store chemicals in drawers.
- Inventory all chemicals by using the Chemical Inventory Sheet in Section IV.
- Identify the location of all chemical storage areas.
- Make sure that all secondary chemical containers are clearly labeled to indicate the chemical name and primary hazard(s).
- Contact the EH&S Office at extension 2508 to dispose of: 1) unused or unwanted chemicals; 2) unstable chemicals (e.g., peroxide formers); 3) reactive chemicals; and 4) chemicals with a limited shelf life.
- Do not transport chemicals in private vehicles or outside of a building. Note: chemical transport must be handled by the EH&S Office.

Hazardous Waste

- Store hazardous waste in a Satellite Accumulation Area within the laboratory.
- Inventory all waste. Include chemical/product name, container size, CAS number (if known), and the amount in containers by using the Waste/Satellite Accumulation Area inventory form (contact the EH&S Office at extension 2508 to acquire this form). Be sure to identify all unknowns.
- Make sure waste is compatible with the storage container.
- Waste containers must be kept closed with an appropriate top, which will prevent spillage.
- Label all waste containers with a hazardous waste label.

- Contact the EH&S Office at extension 2508 for hazardous waste pick-up.

Glassware

- Clean all glassware with an appropriate solvent or cleaning agent. If a substantial amount of chemical residue remains after cleaning, dispose of the glassware as hazardous waste.
- Store glassware in boxes, drawers, and cabinets.
- Dispose of broken glassware in a box designated for broken glassware. If it is necessary, contact the department supervisor or technician for assistance.

Equipment

- Shut off and unplug equipment.
- If necessary, clean up or decontaminate equipment with an appropriate cleaner or disinfectant.
- Store equipment in an appropriate location.
- Contact your department supervisor or technician for assistance.

Keys

- Turn in your keys to the Facilities Operations and Services locksmith upon completion of work area close-out and before departure from the campus.

General Workspace Clean-up

- Remove personal belongings from the work area and dispose of trash.
- Areas where chemicals are used should be cleaned thoroughly. This includes fume hoods, bench tops, cabinets, and drawers.

EH&S Office Inspections

When all work is executed in accordance with the protocol outlined in this section, send the completed Work Area Close-out Checklist to the EH&S Office. It is preferable that this checklist be sent to the EH&S Office by the department supervisor. Upon receiving the signed checklist, the EH&S Office will conduct a final inspection to confirm that all work has been completed.

Work Area Close-out Planning

One Month or Greater Prior to Departure

Employee – Contact the department chair or supervisor and access the Work Area Close-out checklist on page 6.

Department chair or supervisor - Meet with the employee and department technician (if applicable) to discuss close-out protocol.

Three to Four Weeks Prior to Departure

Employee – Execute work area close-out by using the Work Area Close-out checklist. Additionally, contact the EH&S Office for assistance with waste disposal.

Two Weeks Prior to Departure

Employee – Continue work area close-out and perform any specialized tasks that might be required. Finally, contact the EH&S Office to schedule an inspection.

III. Work Area Close-out Checklist

Employee Name: _____ Department: _____
Building: _____ Room(s): _____

- Ensure the proper personal protective equipment (PPE) is available and used during all clean-out. Refer to the department hazard assessment or contact the Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) Office at extension 2508 for assistance with PPE selection.
- Ensure proper waste disposal procedures are followed. Contact the EH&S Office for assistance.
- Conduct a thorough inventory of all chemicals in the space. Check in cupboards, cabinets, hoods and refrigerators.
- Return all unused or unwanted chemicals to the department technician or central storage area. An inventory of returned chemicals should be provided to the technician and EH&S Office.
- Return compressed gas cylinders to the distributor or supplier. Lecture bottles in good condition can be returned to the department technician. If cylinders are rusted or damaged, they should be considered hazardous waste.
- Inventory all biological materials. Usable material can be transferred to the department technician. Unwanted or unusable material must be disposed of properly. Ensure all materials are properly labeled.
- Ensure hazardous waste is properly managed in accordance with SUNY Cortland's Waste Management Program. Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) should be obtained for all hazardous chemicals. Contact the EH&S Office to pick-up hazardous materials.
- Unknown wastes should be isolated from other chemicals and characterized as accurately as possible. An inventory of unknown wastes should be given to the EH&S Office.
- Ensure all laboratory vessels and tools are clean and in cabinets.
- Ensure all bench tops, drawers, cupboards, cabinets, refrigerators, freezers, ovens, incubators, and any other laboratory equipment are cleaned, disinfected, and in working condition.
- Defective equipment or unusable equipment must be disposed of through the campus' Property Control Manager (extension 2488).
- Ensure field research sites, projects, equipment, and fixtures are decommissioned.
- Final approval completed by the EH&S Office.

Employee: _____ Date: _____
(Signature)

Department Head: _____ Date: _____
(Signature)

EH&S representative: _____ Date: _____
(Signature)

