

Moving Your Lab...Safely

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Don't Move More than You Need to Move

Minimize the amount of material to be moved.

Equipment or supplies, biological, chemical or radioactive materials that have not been used for a long time or are no longer needed can be surplus or disposed of as waste.

Surplus unused or outdated equipment through the Personal Property Branch (496-5711).

Consider using the Shared Resources Database which facilitates the exchange of research resources between intramural research labs. Any biologicals, chemicals, plasticware, glassware, or equipment that are no longer needed or are unused may be listed and made available to other NIH labs. To list an available item, use the online Database (<http://dirs.info.nih.gov/resource.htm>).

Complete NIH Form 2683 "Certification that Equipment is Free from Hazards" for each piece of equipment. Check with your Property Custodian to determine whether a form NIH 649 "Report of Property Transfer" must be completed or if the transfer can be done via the online inventory.

Don't take pests along when you move.

Before beginning to pack, contact the Pest Management Unit (496-4294) to arrange for a survey of your laboratory or office. The Pest Management Unit will survey your laboratory and perform pest control services.

Don't move waste materials.

The NIH Waste Disposal Guide (also known as the "Waste Calendar") provides guidance on the safe packaging and disposal procedures for chemical, radioactive, medical pathological (MPW), multihazard and general waste. The Guide is available online (<http://orf.od.nih.gov/waste/wasteguide.html>).

Waste materials must not be abandoned in vacated labs or placed in corridors or other public areas.

Never dispose of hazardous chemical, biological or radioactive wastes down the sink drain or in regular trash.

Radioactive waste.

Radioactive materials to be discarded must be collected by the Radioactive Waste Disposal Service (496-4451). Radioactive waste must remain secured and under control of the Authorized User at all times.

Chemical waste.

Contact the Chemical Waste Disposal Service to pick up excess chemicals or chemical waste (496-4710). Under NO circumstances should chemical waste be disposed of down sink drains.

MPW/biological waste.

MPW/biological waste should be packaged in MPW boxes and delivered to the appropriate collection point. Alternatively, some MPW/biological wastes can be autoclaved and then discarded as general waste. Contact your Occupational Health and Safety Specialist (301-496-2960) for more information.

Pack Safely

- Cardboard boxes are available in several sizes from the Self- Service Stores and should be used to pack equipment, books and supplies.
- Use filament reinforced tape to assemble moving boxes. Cellophane, masking or autoclave tape are not strong enough and should not be used to secure boxes.
- MPW boxes must not be used for storing or moving chemicals, equipment or personal property. Movers will not transport MPW boxes. Because MPW boxes are treated as medical pathological waste, you risk the loss of valuable equipment or irreplaceable records if they are packed in an MPW box.

Obtain clearances and certifications

- In advance of your move, contact your Occupational Health and Safety Specialist (496-2960) to learn what clearances and certifications are necessary for your laboratory and equipment. At least 48 hours before your move, contact OSHB to schedule the clearance process which certifies that your lab is free of all physical, biological and chemical hazards.
- Final laboratory clearance for radioactive materials is scheduled by contacting the Area Health Physicist (HP) at 496-5774. The HP will review the survey done by lab personnel, spot-check the room, and if no problems are found, remove the Caution Radioactive Material sign at the entrance to the room and replace it with a radiation clearance certification.
- No radioactive materials may be used or stored in a room after a radiation clearance certification sticker is posted at the entrance.

Clean and decontaminate

An important step in the moving process is cleaning and decontaminating laboratory surfaces and equipment to protect the health and safety of investigators, movers, and other staff.

Once your laboratory has been vacated, clean and decontaminate, as necessary, all work surfaces, shelves, chemical fume hoods, benches, etc.

Your Area Health Physicist (496-5774) and Occupational Health and Safety Specialist (301-496-2960) can provide recommendations specific to biological, chemical and radioactive materials used in your lab.

Once decontamination is completed, remove or obliterate all warning signs and labels (radiation, biohazard, etc.) from all equipment and the interior of the laboratory

A completed NIH Form 2683, Certification that Equipment is Free from Hazards (NSN 7530-00-LO7-2683) must be attached to each item of equipment whether the property and/or equipment is being moved or surplused.

- **Biological considerations**

Consult with your Occupational Safety and Health Specialist to learn if a detergent and water solution will be sufficient for decontaminating the surfaces in your lab.

If your lab is designated Biosafety Level 2 or 3, contact your Occupational Health and Safety Specialist for appropriate decontamination and decommissioning procedures.

When removing biological and chemical hazards, wear appropriate gloves and eye protection. Thoroughly wipe down surfaces with a detergent and water solution, rinse with water as necessary. Paper towels may be disposed of as MPW.

If equipment or lab furnishings are contaminated by a KNOWN biological hazard or chemical hazard resistant to detergent and water, additional decontamination procedures will be necessary. Your Occupational Health and Safety Specialist can provide specific advice for your situation.

- **Chemical considerations**

If a chemical is known to be more soluble in a nonaqueous medium, first wipe with an appropriate solvent, then wash with detergent and water.

- **Radiological considerations**

Any room to be vacated or renovated and any equipment in which radioactive materials have been used or stored must be cleared of all radioactive materials and fully surveyed for radioactive contamination, including swipe tests for removable contamination and decontaminated as necessary.

Before the move and before radioactive materials can be used or stored in the new laboratory, contact your Area Health Physicist (496-5774) so that your new laboratory can be certified and a Caution Radioactive Materials sign posted.

All radioactive materials must be removed and secured in another properly posted laboratory or disposed of by the Radioactive Waste Service.

Prepare equipment to move safely

- **Refrigerators**

Empty all refrigerators; clean and decontaminate as appropriate.

- **Freezers**

Freezers containing biological materials may be moved without emptying them.

Prior to the move, all radioactive materials must be removed from the freezer. Call the Radiation Safety Branch (496-5774) for specific information on packaging and transport of radioactive materials.

Laboratory personnel are responsible for preparing freezers for the move, ensuring that all loose vials and containers are properly packaged using unbreakable containers (plastic, metal, or cardboard).

All voids within the freezer must be filled with packing material to prevent the contents from shifting during transit. Once the freezer is prepared to move, decontaminate the exterior of the freezer. The movers will secure the freezer lid with plastic straps before moving the freezer.

- **Liquid nitrogen freezers**

Your Occupational Health and Safety Specialist can provide technical assistance to laboratory personnel concerning relocation of liquid nitrogen freezers.

- **Incubators**

Empty all incubators and decontaminate interior and exterior surfaces.

Make sure water jacketed incubators are drained before they are moved.

If radioactive material has been used in the incubator, survey for contamination using swipes and decontaminate as necessary.

- **Gas cylinders**

Remove regulators from all compressed gas cylinders and attach safety caps.

Don't move empty or partially full cylinders. Arrange for the pick up of empty or partially full cylinders through the Transportation Branch (496-3517).

If you use specialized gases, call the vendor to arrange for a pick up of their cylinders.

Have full cylinders sent to your new location.

- **Biological safety cabinets**

Biological safety cabinets currently in service must be decontaminated before moving and then recertified before use at the new location. At least 3 days prior to your move, contact the Safety Support Section, DOHS (496-2960) to schedule decontamination and recertification.

Laboratory personnel are responsible for emptying the cabinet and wiping down all interior surfaces, including the window, with an effective disinfectant. Do not remove the work tray or disassemble the cabinet during this surface wipe down.

- **Chemical fume hoods**

Laboratory personnel are responsible for removing all chemicals and equipment from the hood and chemical storage cabinet. Thoroughly wipe down all fume hood surfaces, including the

window, with a detergent and water solution, rinse with water as necessary. Once the space has been decontaminated, contact your Occupational Health and Safety Specialist (496-2960) to obtain a clearance.

- **Equipment containing hazardous materials**

Contact the Environmental Protection Branch (496-7990) for assistance in dealing with equipment which contains mercury or other hazardous chemicals.

- **Liquid scintillation and gamma counters**

Contact the Radiation Safety Branch (496-5774) for the clearance required when liquid scintillation and gamma counters are surplused or moved.

- **X-ray producing machines**

The Radiation Safety Branch (496-5774) must be notified when units such as electron microscopes, x-ray diffraction units and cabinet x-ray units are moved or surplused.

- **Devices which contain radioactive sources**

The Radiation Safety Branch (496-5774) must be notified before the relocation or surplusing of devices which contain radioactive sources such as irradiators, certain mass spectrometers or gas chromatographs and equipment containing radioactive static charge eliminators.

Move materials safely

Materials (packaged or not) to be moved must not be abandoned or placed in hallways or other public areas.

- **Biological materials**

Biological materials and potentially biohazardous materials (including all etiologic agents, microbial agents, toxins, human and animal tissues, blood and body fluids, etc.) to be moved between locations on the NIH Bethesda campus must be inventoried and packed by responsible, trained staff. The materials must be properly labeled and packed to prevent spills or damage during transport. The packed boxes should also be labeled.

These materials are moved to the new facility by laboratory staff (but not in a privately owned vehicle), not the movers. Contact your Occupational Health and Safety Specialist (496-2960) for more information on proper packaging, labeling and moving methods.

- **Chemicals**

The Chemical Waste Disposal Service will pack and move all chemicals - whether for disposal or relocation to the new lab.

Contact the Chemical Waste Disposal Service (496-4710) at least two weeks before the planned move to schedule the packing of your chemicals.

- **Radioactive materials**

Call the Radioactive Materials Control Section of the Radiation Safety Branch (496-3277) for information regarding packaging and moving radioactive materials.

For radioactive materials to be moved only within the NIH Bethesda campus, responsible, trained laboratory staff must: Take inventory, properly pack and completely label the materials, indicating the name of the Authorized User, radionuclide and activity.

Pack to prevent spills or damage during transport.

For radioactive material being moved to or from an NIH off-campus facility currently under the NRC-NIH license: The Radioactive Materials Control Section of the Radiation Safety Branch (496-3277) must inventory, pack and transport the radioactive materials. Arrangements for this service must be made at least one week prior to the move.

Laboratory staff are prohibited from transporting radioactive materials between the NIH campus and off-campus locations.

Once in your new lab

- If you have been performing recombinant DNA research or if you have filed a Human Pathogen Registration Document, please notify the Division of Occupational Health and Safety (496-2960) of your new building/room numbers.
- Your old lab must be decommissioned and the registration documents amended. Before work begins, your new laboratory must be certified at the appropriate biosafety level and posted with a biological hazard sign.
- Biological safety cabinets must be assembled and certified by the Division of Occupational Health and Safety (496-2960) before use by laboratory personnel.

Where to get assistance

Occupational Health and Safety Specialists 496-2460

Radiation Safety - Area Health Physicists 496-5774

Call For Questions About:

Biological/chemical/physical hazards	496-2960
Biological safety cabinets	496-3457
Chemical fume hood clearances	496-2960
Chemical Waste Disposal Service	496-4710
Decontamination - biological and chemical	496-2960
Decontamination – radiological	496-5774
Hazardous, solid & mixed waste management	496-7990
Human pathogen registration information	496-2960
Maintenance engineering services, Animal Center, Poolesville	496-9040
Maintenance engineering services, Clinical Center	496-5862
Maintenance engineering services, North campus	496-5083
Maintenance engineering services, South campus	496-0477
Medical pathological waste (MPW)	496-2960
Personnel Property Branch	496-5711
Pest Management Services	496-4294
Radiation hazards	496-5774
Radioactive Disposal Service	496-4451
Radioactive materials transport	496-3277
Recombinant DNA registration information	496-2960
Recycling	496-7990
Transportation Branch	496-3517

Emergency Information

Phone numbers - for fire, rescue, hazmat incidents

On campus: call 911

On campus: call 9-911