

Biosafety Laboratory Hibernation at Rutgers University

The following checklist provides Biosafety instructions and topics to consider if a laboratory is placed in a state of hibernation. Hibernation is the notion that the laboratory space will be inactive for a period. This could be due to impending weather affecting the university's operating status, an issued state of emergency, unexpected staffing disruptions, etc. This list is not exhaustive, and any questions or concerns should be directed to the REHS Biosafety team at biosafety@rutgers.edu

Biohazard Materials

- Ensure Biohazardous materials subject to an IBC approval are secured and stored appropriately.
- Ensure infectious-perishable biohazardous materials are stored in refrigerators and/or freezers that have backup up power supplies.
- Review storage of other biologicals and perishable items; examples may include extracted DNA/RNA and tissue culture media reagents.
- Place valuable items in storage units that have backup systems or store items in duplicate locations.
- Develop a backup plan for alternate cooling methods (e.g. liquid nitrogen, dry ice, etc.).

Regulated Medical Waste

- Transfer any accumulated RMW from benchtops and biosafety cabinets, etc., to appropriate longer term RMW collection locations
- Disinfect and empty aspirator collection flasks by the biosafety cabinets and at benchtops.
- Ensure containers of RMW are properly labeled and packaged for pickup, following standard waste collection policies.
- Placed packaged RMW in appropriate storage areas away from potential hazards, fire alarms, egress routes, and walking pathways.

Laboratory Bench and Working Areas

- Disinfect any potentially contaminated surface according to your IBC protocol
- Shut down non-essential/non-critical experiments that need monitoring, are temperature, atmosphere or humidity sensitive, or could be affected by loss of electricity, water, or other services.
- Turn off any working functions, including light bulbs, UV lights, and fan blowers where appropriate, on biological safety cabinets following decontamination and close sashes.

- Check that essential equipment, including incubators, fridges, freezers, and/or -80°C freezers etc., are on red power supply outlets for emergency power. Consolidate where necessary and appropriate. Shut down any unneeded equipment.
- For chemical storage requirements, please refer to [REHS Laboratory Chemical Compatibility Website](#) and [REHS Chemical and Hazardous Material Safety Website](#).
- Ensure that gas tanks are secured. Tanks not in use must have a protective cap covering the valve. Close tanks if feasible. See [Rutgers Compressed Gas Cylinders Website](#) for more guidance.
- Turn off and unplug non-essential electrical devices particularly heat-generating equipment such as hot plates, stir plates, and ovens.
- Ensure that all water sources are turned off (e.g., circulating water baths, aspirators, etc.).
- Guarantee that all refrigerator, freezer and incubator doors are tightly closed.
- Close all doors, including cabinets, storage areas and offices. Lock all exterior lab doors.

General Considerations

- Review current door hazard signage with current laboratory hazards and emergency contacts.
- Identify primary and secondary contacts to monitor essential instruments, experiments, and processes during extended closure.
 - This planning should include updated contact lists of lab and building personnel.
- Back up data and turn off non-essential/non-critical computers. Store laboratory notebooks and computers in areas that will not be impacted by possible broken water pipes. Secure laptops and other easy to remove electronic devices.

RESOURCE:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK55874/>