

Guidance Document

For

Reactivating Paused Research Laboratory Activities

- Review and follow social distancing protocols in the research laboratories and shared office spaces from the University or Division of Research
- Survey the laboratory for unsafe conditions and address them before start of activities including
 - unusual physical conditions
 - biological, chemical, radioactive material or reagent leaks, spills, or releases
- Contact your Building Coordinator for any building-related issues that may affect safe research laboratory reopening
- Sanitize all surfaces including computer keyboards and phones before starting research and preferably daily
- Cleanup/put away chemicals, supplies, equipment, glassware, and other items left out during the pause
- Review your inventory to identify and properly manage any expired, outdated, peroxide-forming, self-reactive, or other reagents with a limited shelf life appropriately
- Secure, correctly label, and/or request a hazardous waste pickup for regulated wastes (biomedical, biological, chemical, radioactive, unwanted hazardous material samples, etc.) at <http://uh.edu/ehls/waste/pickup/>
- Verify that storage receptacles for chemical, medical, biological or radioactive wastes are in good condition
- Pour water down dry traps/floor drains to mitigate sewer gas smells that are often confused with natural gas leaks
- Review and follow any shared laboratory or core research facility restrictions
- Review laboratory safety protocols
 - General laboratory-specific safety protocols including PPE guidelines
 - Standard operating procedures for high risk chemicals
 - Memorandum of Understanding Agreement for biological laboratories
 - Standard operating procedures for radioactive materials, lasers, x-ray machines
- Prior to re-starting laboratory equipment,
 - Review equipment manuals for safe startup instructions/check for calibration requirements

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON
Environmental Health and Safety

- Review equipment status and safely release or mitigate any stored-up energy sources
- Flush all water lines supplying laboratory equipment as applicable
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed until temperature levels return to normal
- Review start-up procedures for any compressed gas cylinders, gas generation stations, and/or gas distribution systems
- Do not use laboratory equipment such as chemical fume hood or biological safety cabinet that is alarming or not working properly.
 - **Fume Hood:** confirm that Laboratory Fume Hood are operational
 - Contact FIX-IT for the malfunctioning fume hood (e.g. alarming, no flow or low flow) at <https://www.uh.edu/facilities-services/services/fix-it/>
 - Contact EHS at ehs@uh.edu or 713-743-5858 after the fume hood is fixed for verification.
 - **Biological Safety Cabinets:** confirm that it is operational; contact EHS at ehs@uh.edu or 713-743-5858 for any issues
- Check and/or verify that emergency eyewash and shower stations are operational
 - Flush all eyewash stations with drains for at least 15 minutes. Submit request for repairs to FIX-IT
- Verify that the Fire Extinguisher pressure gauge is in the “green” area, indicating proper pressure reading; report any issues with Fire Extinguishers to EHS at 713-743-5858 or ehs@uh.edu
- Plan and prepare for supply chain disruptions and limited availability of
 - Personal Protective Equipment (including face shield, gloves, gowns, etc.)
 - Certain laboratory reagents e.g. alcohol, bleach
 - Order delays for certain laboratory consumables
- Plan and conduct work carefully and methodically. Only work on approved projects. Do not rush or work longer hours. Utilize a buddy system especially when working with highly hazardous materials to avoid accidents due to fatigue.