ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

EHS BULLETIN

NOVEMBER 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

LABORATORY DECOMMISSIONING

What is laboratory decommissioning? Laboratory decommissioning is a process by which a laboratory is deconstructed. Materials are disposed of correctly and the space is cleared for renovation of infrastructure to meet environmental health and safety requirements for the next occupant to enter.

HOW TO PLAN OUT DECOMMISSIONING THE LABORATORY SPACE:

Determine what hazards are associated with the laboratory space and what type of decontamination needs to take place. Contact the Biosafety or Radiation Safety offices, if applicable to follow proper protocol for decontamination. Work with EHS and the department head to help set expectations and a timetable so the laboratory can be decommissioned in a timely manner.

KEY POINTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL DECOMMISSIONING:

- Understand what is in the laboratory and document the decommissioning process to ensure that cleaning protocols and adherence to the timetable can be tracked.
- Does the Biological Safety Officer or Radiation Safety Officer need to be contacted for disposal of the appropriate items?
- Identify what needs to be decontaminated in the laboratory space and how to go about the decontamination process. A few areas that are commonly forgotten include the inside of chemical cabinets, equipment, fume hoods and cabinet faces.
- Determine closure obligations with the department head.
- Identify and separate chemicals into surplus and disposal.
- Never leave an unknown chemical or substance behind. This can be a costly burden on the department or the next occupant entering the laboratory space.
- Chemical disposal can be coordinated though EHS. Please use the Chemical and Material Request form found here.
- Update the online chemical inventory list and contact EHS to be removed from the Chemical Safety Assistant online program or to transfer large amounts of inventory to another PI. For more information, visit the EHS website.
- Contact others in the department to rehome equipment that can still be utilized. After this is done, the leftover items can go to surplus here on campus.
- Contact Facilities Management for any repairs that might need to take place.
- Once the laboratory space is cleared, it's time to decontaminate.

For more information or questions about decommissioning a laboratory, contact EHS at chemicalsafety@okstate.edu or call (405) 744-7241.

WINTER WEATHER SAFETY

Many OSU students and employees spend time working or walking outdoors. This increases exposure to outdoor hazards, putting individuals at a greater risk of injury due to extreme weather. There are many things to be aware of as we head into the winter months. Unfortunately, the dangers of winter weather will create additional opportunities for workplace injuries, and unless we begin planning and preparing before that first wave of frigid temperatures and frozen precipitation, many of us will become a weather-related accident or injury statistic.

STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES SHOULD USE EXTREME CAUTION WORKING AND WALKING OUTDOORS IN THE COLD IF ANY OF THESE CONDITIONS ARE PRESENT:

- **Ice or snow on walking surfaces**
- **Below freezing temperatures**
- **High winds creating windchills**
- **Limited shelter**

STEPS TO PROTECT FROM WINTER HAZARDS:

- **Clothing**. Wear several layers of loose fitting, lightweight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing. The outer garments should be tightly woven and water repellent.
- **Hand protection.** Wear mittens, which are warmer than gloves.
- **Exposed skin.** Wear a hat and cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs.
- **Proper footwear.** The best soles for walking on ice are soles made of non-slip rubber. Non-slip rubber soles with large treads will offer plenty of grip and traction on ice-covered surfaces. Shoes and boots should be waterproof.
- **Working outdoors.** Limit time outside on extremely cold days. Cold jobs should be scheduled for the warmest part of the day, and relief workers may need to be assigned for longer jobs.
- **Be prepared.** Carry cold weather gear such as extra socks, hats, jackets, blankets, a change of clothes and a thermos of hot liquid.

CURRENT EVENTS

Bloodborne Pathogen Training
2nd Tuesday of the month, 9-9:45 a.m. and 2-2:45 p.m.
EHS Conference Room, 003 UHS
Required annually for members under OSHA's standard
Registration: email name to chemicalsafety@okstate.edu

Respiratory Protection Training
1st Tuesday of the month, 8:30-9:30 a.m.
FM North Building, Room 101C
Required annually for members who wear respiratory protection
Registration: email name to ohsp@okstate.edu

Fire Safety w/Hands-On Extinguisher Training
2nd Friday of the month, 9-10 a.m.
EHS Conference Room, 003 UHS
Come join us for fire safety education featuring the BullsEye laser training device
Registration: email name to ohsp@okstate.edu

Monthly Employee Training
3rd Thursday of the month, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
EHS Conference Room, 003 UHS
Topics: Hazcom; Fire Safety; Slips, Trips and Falls; Office Safety and Back Safety
Registration: email name to ohsp@okstate.edu

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON WINTER SAFETY:

- Center for Disease Control - Natural Disasters and Severe Weather
- University Weather Safety

For more information or questions on winter weather safety, contact EHS at ehs@okstate.edu or call (405) 744-7241.