RAMPING DOWN LABORATORY OPERATIONS

This guidance document has been developed to assist in the process of ramping laboratory-based research activities. The goal is to restrict on-campus activities to only those activities that are critical and to have those activities performed by a limited number of designated personnel. In doing so, we can maintain our facilities and essential research assets, while also protecting the health and safety of our personnel.

Please refer to our COVID-19 Information & Research Resources pages for the latest information related to research continuity.

Note that this checklist is meant to be a general guide. Not all items apply to every lab. If you have questions, please contact the relevant safety office:

- For questions about biological materials or biohazards, contact Biosafety at biosafety@tufts.edu.
- For questions about radiation or laser safety, contact Radiation Safety at radsafety@tufts.edu.
- For questions on all other safety topics, contact Environmental Health and Safety at josh.foster@tufts.edu (Boston), chris.rock@tufts.edu (Grafton), adam.hartnett@tufts.edu (Medford/Somerville).

PREPARING

☐ Identify all non-critical activities that can be ramped down, curtailed, suspended or delayed.
☐ Identify 2-3 key personnel able to safely perform critical activities. Keep in mind that if personnel get sick, they and their close contacts will not be able to come to work.

COMMUNICATIONS

☐ Create a contact list of lab personnel, principal investigator, lab administrative director, research operations manager, and building manager.
☐ Ensure the contact list is saved where it can be remotely accessed by everyone in the lab. Include home and cell phone numbers.
☐ Test your phone tree or email group to facilitate emergency communication amongst lab researchers and staff.
☐ Ensure that emergency contacts listed on door signage are up to date. If updates are needed, contact EHS to ensure that the Communications Center has accurate information.
SHIPPING RECEIVING

☐ Do not order any new research materials except those items needed to support minimal critical activities.
☐ Cancel orders for non-critical research materials if they have not yet shipped.
☐ Plan ahead for any hazmat shipments to coordinate the shipping and receiving activities.
☐ Plan ahead for any dry ice shipments and ensure they are properly stored. **Do not place packages containing dry ice in a walk-in cold room or freezer.**

RESEARCH MATERIALS

☐ Freeze down any biological stock material for long term storage.
☐ If possible, consolidate storage of vulnerable perishable items within storage units that have backup systems.
☐ Fill dewars and cryogen containers for sample storage and critical equipment.
☐ Consult with animal care units about current needs and recommendations for research animals. The ability of each unit to care for animals with special feeding, breeding or nursing requirements may be limited and subject to rapid change.
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Secure all hazardous materials in long-term storage. Assure each container is upright, labeled and securely closed. Refer to Chemical Hygiene Plan for guidance.

Ensure all flammables are stored in flammable storage cabinets and that corrosives are in EHS-approved storage cabinets. Flammables should not be stored in refrigerators or freezers unless they are explosion-proof.

Ensure that all items are labeled appropriately. All working stocks of materials must be labeled with the full name of its contents and include hazards.

Remove all chemicals and glassware from benchtops and fume hoods and store in cabinets or appropriate shelving.

Remove bench liners and clean the benches to remove any debris or missed spills.

Request waste pickup for peroxide forming compounds or other chemicals that may become unstable over time, such as Diethyl Ether, Tetrahydrofuran and Cyclohexene.

Collect contents of any acid/base baths and request waste pickup.

Remove infectious materials from biosafety cabinets, and autoclave, disinfect, or safely store them as appropriate.

Confirm inventory of controlled substances and document in logbook.

Secure controlled substances according to DEA regulations. Consider additional measures to restrict access to controlled substances.

Secure physical hazards such as sharps.

Secure radioactive materials. If you need to transfer RAM to another location, please contact radsafety@tufts.edu or call (617)308-3781.

Close gas valves. If possible, shut off gas to area.

Turn off appliances, computers, hot plates, ovens, and other equipment.

Unplug equipment, extension cords, and power strips if possible.

For hardwired equipment that can be powered down, ensure all safety switches are put in the off position and verify equipment cannot be run.

Check that all gas cylinders are secured and stored in an upright position. Remove regulators and use caps.

Plan for management of non-critical cryogenically cooled equipment such as cryostats.

Lasers: Class 3B & 4 systems should be cleaned and de-energized

Elevate equipment, materials, and supplies, including electrical wires and chemicals, off of the floor to protect against flooding from broken pipes.

Check that all equipment requiring uninterrupted electrical power is connected to an Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) and/or emergency power (emergency generator).
EQUIPMENT

☐ Check that refrigerator and freezer doors are tightly closed and there is no ice buildup. If connected to a remote monitor, confirm that the listed contact person is correct and available in the event of an alarm.

☐ Ensure that incubator doors are tightly closed, if using for critical activities. If not being used, then turn off the incubator, unplug, and disconnect the gas (if applicable).

☐ Shut off all utilities to fume hoods and biosafety cabinets (compressed air, nitrogen, natural gas, water).

☐ Water-filled Equipment: Only leave these running if required for critical activities. These should be drained of all fluids especially lines that may be connected in the case of a recirculating chiller.

☐ Biosafety cabinets: surface decontaminate the inside work area, close the sash and power down. Do NOT leave the UV light on.

☐ Fume hoods: Clear the hood of all hazards, allowing for proper airflow and shut the sash.

☐ Review proper shut down procedures and measures to prevent surging.

☐ Shut down and unplug sensitive electric equipment.

☐ Cover and secure or seal vulnerable equipment with plastic.

DECONTAMINATION

☐ Decontaminate areas of the lab as you would do routinely at the end of the day.

☐ Decontaminate and clean any reusable materials.

☐ Decontaminate equipment.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

☐ Coordinate with EHS to ensure that recurring hazardous waste pickups are maintained for critical activities. Pickups for non-critical activities should be suspended.

☐ Collect and properly label all hazardous chemical waste in satellite accumulation areas. Segregate incompatible chemicals by means of a physical barrier, such as plastic bins or trays. Verify all bottles are securely sealed.

☐ Submit a request for hazardous chemical waste to be picked up. Unless waste is still being added to a container, please request pick up for disposal.

☐ Biological waste: Disinfect and empty aspirator collection flasks. Dispose of liquid and solid wastes according to your approved methods. If needed, submit a request for biohazardous waste to be picked up.

☐ Collect radioactive waste in appropriate waste containers. Request a pickup by contacting radsafety@tufts.edu or call (617)308-3781, or ensure waste is properly stored and secured. Log all drain disposals and ensure disposal limits are not exceeded.

☐ Discard unwanted, non-hazardous chemicals. Refer to EHS guidance for disposal instructions.
SECURITY

☐ Lock all entrances to the lab. Ensure key personnel supporting critical functions have access.
☐ Close all windows.
☐ Secure lab notebooks and other data.
☐ Take laptops home.
☐ If Controlled Substances are needed during this period of restricted research activity, ensure that those performing the critical tasks are authorized and know how to access the substances.
☐ All radioactive materials stock vials are required to be secured by locking in an approved storage device.

HOUSEKEEPING

☐ Ensure all sink faucets are off. Also quickly inspect under the sink for leaky lines, etc.
☐ Ensure all reusable PPE is stored appropriately: Lab coats are hung up; safety glasses are stored with lenses facing up.
☐ All chairs should be pushed into benches/desks to allow open aisles and walkways.
☐ Remove excess empty boxes/clutter and dispose appropriately.
☐ If you have a known area in lab that has leaks during rain events, arrange to have a collection barrel in those areas.
☐ Shut off all lights.

GENERAL AREA

☐ Remove all perishable and open food items from the lab’s break areas, lockers, personal spaces.