



PREPARING LABS, SHOPS, & STUDIOS FOR HOLIDAY OPERATIONS REFERENCE GUIDE

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EH&S recommends that all laboratory, shop, and studio personnel be trained and prepared for properly and safely shutting down or pausing their operations for scheduled holidays or unexpected closures. During extended holiday breaks, you should also prepare your laboratory, shop, or studio for reduced operations and a decrease in personnel. The following guide may serve as a reminder for researchers or can also be provided as a checklist for new staff.

The following items should be considered when planning for holiday operations.



Confirming a critical contact list.



Ensuring essential equipment is on emergency power and has adequate supplies to run through any absence while non-essential equipment is shut down properly.



Securing physical research materials and backing up critical research data.



Reviewing your emergency response plans.

Contact Lists/Emergency Contacts

- ☐ Review your lab's contact list, including off-campus phone numbers where people can be reached, and make sure it is up to date.
- ☐ Include any administrators, building managers, animal care staff, or other contacts generally needed for your research operations. These persons may be difficult to reach during holiday breaks. If anyone outside of your lab is critical to your operations, reach out to confirm that they are available if you may need them.
- ☐ Consider adding personnel from other labs if this is a shared space where communication may be valuable.
- ☐ Include other important campus phone numbers, such as
 - ☐ Campus Police - 662-325-2121 for non-emergencies or emergencies
 - ☐ Facilities Management - 662-325-2005
 - ☐ Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) - 662-325-0026
- ☐ Print out the contact list to post in your space. Consider sending it to all lab members (and administrators) remotely so everyone can access it off-campus.
- ☐ Ensure that your lab door sign is updated with current off-campus phone numbers. [New Lab Sign Request](#)

Equipment

- ☐ Walk through the lab, shop, or studio to ensure all non-critical equipment is turned off.
- ☐ Shut down and unplug any sensitive electronic equipment or equipment that produces heat (i.e., furnaces, ovens, hot plates, heaters).

- ☐ Place dust or protective covers over high-value equipment that has been shut down properly.
- ☐ If equipment is critical and must remain in operation:
 - ☐ Review the equipment manual to ensure safe operation for the expected duration.
 - ☐ All equipment left in operation must be in good working order and cannot be modified in any way outside of manufacture instructions.
 - ☐ Remove all flammable or combustible materials away from equipment left in operation, especially those that produce a heat source, i.e., drying ovens.
 - ☐ Check to ensure critical equipment is plugged into an emergency power receptacle (red outlets) if available in your location. Do NOT use extension cords to plug large equipment (freezers, incubators, biosafety cabinets, ultracentrifuges, ovens) into any outlet.
 - ☐ If your equipment (i.e., water baths, incubator water trays, CO2 tanks, or liquid nitrogen tanks) requires consumable material, ensure they are filled before or as needed during the holiday break. Arrange the supplies of these consumable materials before the holiday break, especially if this is a shared resource that other labs may need.
 - ☐ Consider installing remote alarms that notify you if a freezer or oven temperature rises above a safe setpoint.
 - ☐ Unplug all portable space heaters ([must be U.L. listed](#)).
- ☐ Secure all compressed gas cylinders (empty, full, and in use). Check levels and determine if you need to replace tanks before the holiday break.
- ☐ Walk through the lab and make sure all vacuum lines are shut and all gas valves are closed.
- ☐ Check that all refrigerator, freezer, and incubator doors are tightly closed.

Purchasing/Delivery

During holidays, you may have difficulty sourcing even commonly used research materials. Recognize that deliveries may be impacted during the holidays, with possible shipping delays and difficulty for couriers to get into certain areas of buildings. If you are expecting a critical shipment, track it and ensure that someone from your lab is on-site to receive it when it arrives. Avoid ordering sensitive materials or those that must be kept frozen, if possible, over the holidays or extended breaks.

- ☐ Review what materials are critical and order ahead of time.
- ☐ Be familiar with your building's loading dock if your critical supplies are delivered during the holiday break.

Physical Materials

Secure all controlled, regulated, or hazardous materials as appropriate.

- ☐ Review cell culture stocks; ensure backup stocks are frozen for long-term storage in freezers or liquid nitrogen tanks.
- ☐ Ensure all chemical or other stock materials are labeled appropriately for non-research personnel who may need to enter your space.
- ☐ Request waste pickup for full containers of hazardous chemicals and radioactive materials before the break. Consider requesting pick up even if the containers are not full if long-term storage in the lab could cause a hazard or smell.
- ☐ Ensure that doors are closed and securely locked.

Data

- ☐ Back up critical research data, ideally in a way that they can be accessed remotely.
- ☐ Secure lab notebooks and other data.
- ☐ Take laptops ([Hand Receipt Form must be completed for MSU Equipment](#)) and personnel electronics home.

Scheduling/Working Alone

It is essential to communicate about holiday schedules to ensure that critical work is completed while maintaining the necessary equipment and research materials.

Working alone in shops, studios, and labs should be avoided whenever possible. Ideally, you should plan to work with another person (AKA the buddy system), as buildings are sparsely populated during holiday breaks and unexpected closures. Still, if that isn't possible, the following steps are recommended to ensure appropriate safety measures:

- ☐ Notify the PI or supervisor of the date(s) and time(s) the work will be conducted and check-ins as appropriate. Let the PI or supervisor know if you are working alone.
- ☐ Perform a Hazard Assessment with the PI or supervisor before working alone, including these elements:
 - ☐ Identification of tasks and hazards involved in the work
 - ☐ Required personal protective equipment (PPE) to reduce the likelihood of injury
 - ☐ Consequences resulting from the worst-case scenario
 - ☐ Written standard operating procedures (SOP) identifying safety controls and PPE
- ☐ It is recommended that individuals have the appropriate level of experience and have completed the required safety training to conduct tasks and activities safely.
- ☐ Be familiar with MSU Emergency Preparedness and Response procedures
 - ☐ Identify the nearest emergency eyewash/safety shower
 - ☐ Know where the emergency exits are located
 - ☐ In the event of an emergency, ensure there is direct access to a phone at all times
 - ☐ Call Campus Police at 662-325-2121 in the event of a serious or life-threatening emergency
- ☐ In addition to the above steps, anyone working alone in shops, studios, and labs is encouraged to notify MSU PD at 662-325-2121 during holiday operations or unexpected closures.

Emergency Response plans

All lab members should have the lab contact list, be aware of what to do in case of emergency (fire, biohazard spill, chemical spill), know [how to report an injury](#), and be signed up for [Maroon Alert](#).

- ☐ Anyone who recognizes a hazardous situation should stop and contact Campus Police (662-325-2121) straightaway.