

## Housekeeping in the Research Laboratory – Guidance for FM

### Laboratory Hazards Overview

Labs have normal workplace risks such as slips, falls and electricity hazards. In most cases there will also be chemicals present, but the lab may also use biological materials or radioactive materials. In addition to those hazards, certain research equipment may produce a hazardous environment by their nature of operation. For example, some laser systems generate beams which can be invisible and hazardous to the eyes. For the non-researcher (visitors, housekeepers): **always read and observe the laboratory entrance signage** which will indicate specific hazards that may be present in the laboratory. When it is approved to conduct work in a research laboratory, the goal for housekeepers is to **avoid contact with the research materials**.

### Communication with the Research Laboratory Occupants

The cleaning of floors and emptying of regular trash bins are basic tasks that Facility Management staff may undertake in most of the teaching and research labs on campus. Principal Investigators (PI) have the responsibility to ensure the safety of individuals present in their labs. Therefore, housekeeping services are **arranged directly with the laboratory's PI** or designee. Depending upon the types of research conducted in the lab, such as the use of open beam lasers, certain housekeeping services (trash removal, floor cleaning) may not be requested or permitted by the PI or designee. If there are no hazards preventing personnel entry, and the PI has allowed access, housekeeping staff can enter the lab and safely remove regular, non-hazardous waste containers.

When a lab is ready for housekeeping services involving floor cleaning, **researchers will prepare the laboratory to ensure the safety of the housekeeping staff**. Researchers will communicate the completion of the actions to housekeeping supervisors or their designee. The important point is that there needs to be open communication by the housekeeping staff and the laboratory occupants to ensure the lab is prepared for the housekeepers to conduct their cleaning safely. **A signature on the "Safe to Clean Checklist" by the Radiation Safety Officer (RSO) (for floor stripping/waxing in any radioactive material lab) or by the Biosafety Officer (for all work in a BSL-3 lab) is required.**

### Housekeeping Floor Cleaning Tasks Permitted by Lab Type

Approval for entry and work is provided by the researchers. The following list summarizes the allowable housekeeping floor services permitted in certain laboratories on campus.

Lab Type	Floor Cleaning Task Summary
<b>BSL-2 Labs &amp; Autoclave Rooms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Mopping is OK</li> <li>✓ No vacuuming</li> <li>✓ Review "SAFE TO CLEAN" checklist or equivalent clearance communication</li> </ul>
<b>BSL-3 Labs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Review "SAFE TO CLEAN" checklist or equivalent clearance communication</li> <li>✓ All housekeeping in a BSL-3 lab requires prior approval by the Biosafety Officer</li> </ul>
<b>Radioactive Material Labs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Mopping is OK</li> <li>✓ Vacuuming is OK</li> <li>✓ Review "SAFE TO CLEAN" checklist or equivalent clearance communication</li> <li>✓ Floor stripping/waxing requires prior approval by the Radiation Safety Officer</li> </ul>
<b>General Labs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Mopping is OK</li> <li>✓ Vacuuming is OK</li> <li>✓ Review "SAFE TO CLEAN" checklist or equivalent clearance communication</li> </ul>

**Remember these Important Actions to DO**

- ✓ Review the laboratory entrance signage before entering a lab. Know which labs require approval to enter.
- ✓ Communicate with the laboratory occupants. They will prepare the lab to ensure the safety of the housekeepers during waste removal and floor cleaning tasks.
- ✓ You can touch/move regular waste containers, chairs and empty boxes.
- ✓ While mopping or vacuuming a lab, be mindful of mop handles and vacuum packs so you don't accidentally knock over items that might contain hazardous materials.
- ✓ While mopping be cautious around extension cords along the floor and avoid contact with mop/water. Talk with the laboratory occupants if picking them up off the floor is needed to clean the floor safely or mop around them.
- ✓ Cleaning an "office area" within a laboratory that is not directly part of the research area/research bench is acceptable and presents no additional laboratory hazards to the housekeeping staff.
- ✓ When in doubt, find out. Ask questions and bring concerns to supervisors.
- ✓ **AUTOCLAVE ROOMS:** Do not pick up waste bags or trash in autoclave rooms. The researchers take responsibility for removal of trash from autoclave rooms. Do not vacuum in autoclave rooms. Mopping is acceptable after clearance is provided by the researchers.
- ✓ **POSTED BSL-2 LABS:** Do not vacuum in a BSL-2. Mopping is acceptable after clearance is provided by the researchers.
- ✓ **POSTED BSL-3 LABS:** All housekeeping work in BSL-3 labs require ESSR/Biosafety Officer approval.
- ✓ **POSTED RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL LABS:** It is okay to conduct mopping and vacuuming in posted radioactive material labs after clearance is provided by the researchers. Ensure approval by ESSR/Radiation Safety Officer prior to all floor stripping/waxing.
- ✓ Always follow FM procedures and wear the PPE that has been assigned for the task.
- ✓ Wash hands when gloves are removed and when work is finished.
- ✓ Report spills, personal contamination and incidents of any kind immediately to supervisors and ESSR.

**Remember these actions to AVOID**

- Do not move chemical containers, radioactive wastes, biological wastes, or cylinders. The researchers take responsibility for moving or securing these items prior to floor cleaning. Some waste containers may be in bins or research equipment may be found on the floors – take care when mopping or vacuuming around these items. Do not move them.
- Do not pick up "research-related trash" found on the floor (pipette tips, tubes); the researchers take responsibility for picking up "research-related trash" that may have fallen on the floor prior to cleaning.
- Do not place housekeeping tools or supplies on the bench. Even if the bench looks completely clean, keep your materials off the bench tops in order to prevent contact with contamination.
- Do not move any research equipment or containers that are present on the bench or the floor. Note, it is okay to move lab chairs in order to conduct floor cleaning.
- **Do not attempt to clean up after an incident or spill no matter how harmless the material may seem.** Some hazardous chemicals look like water, but if you come into contact with them, they can be harmful. Report incidents and spills to supervisors and ESSR.
- Do not eat or drink in the research laboratories.