

Laboratory Emergency Preparedness Checklist

For an emergency that may result in the interruption of BSL1 and BSL2 laboratory operations, such as University closure or controlled access, the following are the recommended steps to be taken prior, during, and after an event.

This is not a policy document, but rather a guide for labs. Your lab may have unique considerations not outlined here.

Preplanning Activities

- Ensure you are signed up to receive UTHealth Alert communications on emergency events affecting UTHealth. Information on registration can be found [here](#).
- Assess utility dependencies (domestic water, chilled water, steam, HVAC, and emergency power) for each piece of equipment in the lab.
- Prepare a list of procedures for equipment that must be reset or restarted if the power is lost.
- Confirm critical equipment that needs emergency power (computers, fridges/freezers, incubators, etc.) is hooked up to the proper power source (red outlets). Unplug all non-essential equipment
- Use surge protectors to protect sensitive equipment in the event of a power surge.
- Turn refrigerators and freezers to the coldest settings.
- Identify critical research materials (notebooks, hard drives, files) that may need to be removed from the lab and who is responsible for their removal.
- Document procedures and PPE for obtaining dry ice/liquid nitrogen for critical samples, if refrigerators/freezers fail.
- Identify emergency equipment (first aid kit, flashlight, batteries, spill kit, etc.), who is responsible for maintaining them, and where they are to be stored.
- Keep an updated list of emergency contacts on lab door.
- Designate the lab's 24/7 emergency contacts. Update and print phone list.
- Develop a line of succession for emergency lab contacts if PI cannot be reached.

Shutting down the laboratory for an emergency closure

- Secure or shut down experiments that could be affected by the loss of electricity, water, or other services.
- Close fume hoods and biosafety cabinets.
- Remove all chemicals and glassware from benchtops and store in the cabinets.
- Remove infectious materials or rDNA material from biosafety cabinets, and autoclave, disinfect, or safely store them as appropriate.
- No hazardous materials, waste, or equipment should be left on the lab floors.
- Ensure that all chemicals, radioactive, and hazardous waste containers are properly covered, sealed and/or in secondary containment.
- Ensure all gas valves are shut closed. If available, shut off gas to the entire area.
- Turn off appliances, computers, hotplates, ovens, and other equipment, if possible. Unplug equipment, if possible.
- Elevate critical equipment/materials off the floor.

- Ensure gas cylinders are capped and secured.
- Fill dewars and cryogen containers for sample storage and critical equipment.
- Ensure that water-reactive chemicals are in sealed containers and stored in areas that are unlikely to become wet.
- Ensure arrangements have been made for the care and feeding of laboratory animals. Follow the recommended actions of CLAMC.
- Relocate equipment away from windows.
- Close and lock all laboratory doors/windows to prevent/mitigate any weather-related damages.

Resuming laboratory operations after an emergency closure

- If conditions indicate a hazardous situation might exist, do not enter the building or lab space until it has been cleared by emergency response personnel.
- Once cleared to enter, check equipment. Restart, reset, reprogram, or recalibrate as appropriate.
- Check chemical fume hoods and biosafety cabinets for airflow.
- Report any hazardous conditions to EHS at 713.500.5832 or 911; report any facility-related issues to Facilities at 713-500-FIXT.

Emergency Contact Information

UT Police - Emergencies	713-500-4357 or 911
Environment Health and Safety - Hotline	713-500-5832
UT Health Services	713-500-3267
Employee Needlestick – Business hours	713-500-3267
– After hours	800-770-9206
Student Needlestick – Business hours	713-500-5171
– After hours	713-500-6824
Facilities Operations/Maintenance requests	713-500-3498