



# Safe Operating Procedure

(Revised 10/25)

## LABORATORY HIBERNATION CONSIDERATIONS

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### Purpose

The purpose of this Safe Operating Procedure is to provide instructions and topics to consider if a laboratory is placed in hibernation. In using the term hibernation, we are referring to the notion that a laboratory may be in a state of inactivity for an extended period of time. The checklist provided herein is not inclusive. Your laboratory may have specific considerations beyond this checklist.

### Hibernation Checklist

- Review your EHS-provided door placard with current laboratory hazards and emergency contacts. If revision to signage is necessary either from the hazard or contact standpoint (guidelines below), request new signage at [ehs@unl.edu](mailto:ehs@unl.edu) and updated signage will be provided.
- Identify primary and secondary contacts to monitor essential instruments, experiments, and processes during extended closure. This plan should include updated contact lists for both laboratory and building personnel.
- Shut down non-essential/non-critical experiments that need monitoring, are temperature, atmosphere or humidity sensitive, or could be affected by loss of electricity, water, or other services.
- Ensure that containers of chemicals, radioactive materials, and hazardous waste are properly labeled, closed, and placed in appropriate storage areas away from incompatible hazards. Ensure radioactive materials are secured. Follow standard waste collection requests to EHS for hazardous and radioactive waste.
- Ensure materials subject to an IBC approval are appropriately stored in accordance with approved protocols. Disinfect any potentially contaminated surfaces. To the extent possible, autoclave any potential biohazard waste.
- Review storage of perishable items. If research is critical, identify strategies for storage (e.g., storage units that have backup systems or store items in duplicate locations). Do not order new research supplies unless needed to support critical functions.



- Develop a plan for replenishment of cryogenics to maintain specimens or equipment. Consider equipment shutdown if feasible.
- If animals are used in your research, consult the Institutional Animal Care Program for their recommendations and guidance at:  
<https://research.unl.edu/researchresponsibility/iacp/>.
- If human subjects participate in your research, consult the Institutional Review Board for their recommendations and guidance at:  
<https://research.unl.edu/researchcompliance/human-subjects-research/>
- Ensure that all water sources are turned off (e.g., circulating water baths, aspirators, etc.).
- Ensure that gas tanks are secured. Close tanks if feasible.
- Turn off and unplug non-essential electrical devices particularly heat-generating equipment such as hot plates, stir plates, and ovens.
- Ensure that all refrigerator, freezer and incubator doors are tightly closed.
- If possible, empty chemical fume hoods and shut them down. If materials must remain in a chemical fume hood due to safety considerations, close the sash and leave the fume hood in an operational state. Turn off biological safety cabinets following decontamination.
- Back up data and turn off non-essential/non-critical computers. Store laboratory notebooks and computers in areas that will not be impacted by possible broken water pipes. Secure laptops and other easy to remove electronic devices.
- Close all doors, including cabinets, storage areas and offices. Lock all exterior lab doors.
- Notify EHS ([ehs@unl.edu](mailto:ehs@unl.edu)) that the laboratory is in a hibernation state as there may be other considerations beyond those listed above.