

Emergency Preparedness Checklist

Is your laboratory prepared for an emergency, including a severe weather event?

Laboratory equipment, materials and research can be protected from loss during emergency situations by taking precautions that will minimize the impact of dangerous conditions (e.g. wind, rain, flooding) and/or loss of services (electric, heat, water). Prepare a lab contingency plan that meets your specific needs. This plan should be shared with your lab, your department and your building manager for inclusion in the building emergency plan. The plan should be implemented whenever an emergency occurs or is forecasted. Remember, you must take responsibility to protect your laboratory and research.

Preparing:

ITEM	Complete	N/A	Notes
Prepare a list of and 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.			
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 procedure and PPE for obtaining dry ice/liquid nitrogen for critical samples, if fridges/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 and share with Building Manager and EH&S.			

If a severe weather warning has been issued (typically 6-12 hours before):

ITEM	Complete	N/A	Notes
Shutdown experiments that could be affected by the loss of electricity, water, or other services.			
Store all hazardous materials safely in closed/secured cabinets or other storage locations.			
Elevate critical equipment/materials off the floor and cover in preparation for potential flooding.			
Ensure lab animals will be fed and cared for.			
Close and lock all laboratory, office, and utility doors before leaving.			

During loss of utilities (Power/Water/Natural Gas/HVAC):

ITEM	Complete	N/A	Notes
Secure all hazardous experiments. Make sure they are stabilized and discontinued. Close all valves and containers. Store cultures and radioactive materials safely. Close sashes on fume hoods and biosafety cabinets.			
Make sure to put all equipment into the “off” position to prevent issues with reenergizing equipment (lasers, heating equipment, etc.). Unplug equipment, if possible.			
Leave the lab and close all doors behind you to contain hazardous and odorous vapors, and to minimize the risk of fire.			
Check critical equipment as emergency power may not activate fully for a full minute after loss of power.			

When utilities are restored:

ITEM	Complete	N/A	Notes
Return to laboratory buildings only when it is safe to do so and entry has been authorized by emergency personnel.			
Be careful of hazards that may have been generated due to loss of utilities (buildup of hazardous vapors, loss of containment, etc.) – Never reenter the lab after an emergency unsupervised.			
Check all equipment for hazardous conditions before restarting.			
Wear protective gloves, footwear, face/eye protection when cleaning up your lab after an emergency or a severe weather event.			

Additional Resources can be found at the EH&S web page. <http://www.albany.edu/ehs/>