

Chemical Equipment Disinfection/Decontamination

Each Principal Investigator and ultimately each University Department is responsible for properly managing hazardous materials in their laboratories. If equipment has become contaminated with chemicals, it must be decontaminated before being moved either for transfer or to storage. Fixed equipment such as chemical fume hoods must also be decontaminated when a researcher leaves an area. The Chemical Safety Program has designed this tagging protocol to assure personnel maintaining or moving laboratory fixtures and equipment that they will not be unknowingly exposed to hazardous chemical contamination. The person responsible for performing the clean-up may include faculty, staff, post-doctoral and graduate students.

Departments may be charged for improper management of hazardous materials that results in regulatory actions or fines from outside agencies or for Department of Occupational Health and Safety services required to remove or identify contaminants. OH&S will not be responsible for loss incurred by individuals or departments as a result of regulation-mandated removal of hazardous materials.

Most pieces of equipment can be cleaned by wiping down with a detergent solution followed by a water rinse. If a material has a specialized cleaning procedure, then a lab representative knowledgeable in the proper use and decontamination of the material should perform the clean-up. Hoods and large items should have all containers removed and surfaces wiped down with detergent and water. Appropriate personal protective equipment must be worn during decontamination – gloves, chemical splash goggles and a lab coat or apron.

After the equipment is clean then the Chemical Safety Release Form should be completed and sent to OH&S. A Chemical Safety representative will issue a safety release tag to be attached to the item before it is moved or the lab is vacated. Once equipment is put back in service, the release tag must be removed.