

Hurricane Preparedness – Emergency Plans for Laboratories

Scope: This guidance document applies to all laboratories at UT Health Science Center at San Antonio and is written to serve as a source of guidance for laboratories in the event of a disaster (i.e. hurricane, flood).

Background: Hurricanes, floods, and other natural disasters can pose challenges to the safety and operation of research laboratories. In these situations, valuable samples and collected data can be compromised. Well thought-out plans should be developed to ensure the preservation of these items. This document will serve as the contingency plan for such natural disasters. Please note that check-list below is not all-encompassing. There may be special considerations specific to your laboratory that are not addressed here.

Emergency Preparedness – June 1 Beginning of Hurricane Season: Below is an action timeline to be used when preparing your laboratories for emergencies. It is color-coded to reflect the progression of the event. Implement the guidelines below as the status of the event progresses.

Emergency Status	Action	Completed By
Normal Condition	Normal Operations	N/A
5 Days (120 hours) Condition White	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update all emergency contact information (home, cell phone, pagers) of all lab personnel. Ensure current contact information is posted outside your labs, and ensure contact information is available to key University personnel (Dean’s Office, Environmental Health & Safety, etc.). 3. Be prepared to protect research documentation, including lab notebooks, computer hard drives, and other critical data management systems. 4. Plan ahead and implement a lab-specific emergency plan. Review this plan at least annually. 5. Order dry ice for freezers containing critical samples. 6. Verify that all critical or sensitive equipment is connected to the building’s emergency power. Please note, however, that emergency power may also be compromised during times of disaster. 	

Emergency Status	Action	Completed By
<p data-bbox="256 310 388 380">4 Days (96 hours)</p> <p data-bbox="256 415 388 485">Condition Green</p>	<ol data-bbox="467 310 1105 436" style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete all running experiments and do not begin any new experiments during the evacuation period. 2. Secure all samples, including research animals. 	
<p data-bbox="256 814 388 884">3 Days (72 hours)</p> <p data-bbox="256 919 388 989">Condition Blue</p>	<p data-bbox="467 520 1068 583">Hazardous Materials (Biological, Chemical, and Radiological)</p> <ol data-bbox="467 619 1154 1556" style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure all hazardous materials, including waste containers, are clearly stored and labeled. Arrange for all hazardous waste (chemical and biological) to be picked up by Safety. 2. Ensure all volatile, toxic, and infectious materials are tightly sealed. 3. Ensure all chemicals are stored in appropriate locations (away from windows, off of the floor, in appropriate storage cabinets). 4. Protect all water-reactive chemicals. 5. Ensure gas cylinders are capped and secured with belts, straps or chains. 6. Prevent the release of hazardous biological materials. Inactivate all cultures that could pose a risk if exposed to flood waters. 7. Relocate all stock cultures away from flooded areas. 8. Secure all radioactive isotopes. Ensure proper storage, labeling and shielding. 9. Consider moving all hazardous materials to areas that are not prone to flooding. 	
<p data-bbox="256 1623 388 1692">2 Days (48 hours)</p> <p data-bbox="256 1728 388 1797">Condition Yellow</p>	<ol data-bbox="467 1623 1138 1818" style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove all hazardous materials from fume hoods and biosafety cabinets and secure in appropriate storage locations. 2. Close sashes. If power is lost, fume hoods and biosafety cabinets will be inoperable. 	

<p>1.5 Days (36 hours)</p> <p>Condition Amber</p> <p><i>Watch</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unplug all non-essential equipment (hot plates, magnetic stirrers, heating mantles, etc.) 2. Use appropriate surge protectors for all sensitive equipment. 3. Re-locate all equipment away from windows. 4. Back up all critical computer files. 5. Cover all sensitive and critical equipment. 6. Close and lock all laboratory doors. 7. Ensure ready access to corridors and exits. 	
<p>1 Day (24 hours)</p> <p>Condition Red</p> <p><i>Warning</i></p>	<p>FACILITY IS CLOSED</p>	
<p>Condition White (Post Event)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Follow all post-evacuation procedures and do not enter buildings until the “All Clear” signal is given by the appropriate authorities. 	

For questions, please contact Environmental Health & Safety:

Environmental Health & Safety, 1.343T DTL
(210) 567-2955
<http://research.uthscsa.edu/safety>