

Safetygram

NCI-Frederick

ISM145

Laboratory Personnel

February 2013

Decontamination of Laboratory Equipment

Biological, chemical, or radioactive contamination of scientific laboratory equipment may pose a potential health risk to personnel who service, repair, and handle the equipment. Since investigators and laboratory staff have primary knowledge of the potential contamination of laboratory equipment with hazardous materials, they are responsible for cleaning and decontaminating laboratory equipment before NCI-Frederick or other service personnel handle it.

Radioactive Contamination:

- Equipment that has been used with radioactive materials needs to be monitored for radioactivity and, if contaminated, cleaned to background levels before being repaired in the laboratory or removed for offsite repair. Similarly, rental laboratory equipment being returned to a manufacturer or equipment being transferred to surplus must be free of radioactive contamination. Only approved radiation workers are authorized to clean (decontaminate) equipment containing residual radioactive material.

Biological Contamination:

- Equipment potentially contaminated with hazardous biological materials should be treated with an appropriate surface decontaminant such as Cavicide or a 1:100 or 1:10 dilution of sodium hypochlorite (household bleach) by the investigator. The bleach solution should be made on a weekly basis, but EHS encourages making the bleach solution daily. Other decontaminants may be applicable to your work depending upon the research agent. Contact EHS for a recommendation.

Chemical Contamination:

- Equipment potentially contaminated with hazardous chemicals should be wiped down with an appropriate cleaning agent such as soap and water or acetone. Drain and flush oil from vacuum pumps, etc. Remove thermometers from water baths. Contact EHS for disposal of mercury from McLeod gauges or other mercury containing equipment. Awareness of potential hazards associated with contaminated scientific equipment and appropriate surface decontamination by laboratory personnel will help ensure a safer working environment for service personnel and all NCI Frederick employees.

Laboratory Equipment Decontamination Qualified Training is offered by EHS. Contact EHS at x1451 to sign up for this training.