

FIU Hurricane Preparedness Guidelines for Lab Areas

Hurricane Season has started. Is your lab prepared? Here are some tips to help prepare your lab for hurricanes:

1. Pre-Hurricane Season

- a. Update the emergency response plan. Include any new hazardous materials, equipment, or lab personnel.
- b. Check emergency phone numbers. Update lab personnel personal home and cell numbers, and post them on the entrance door of the lab space.
- c. Check emergency, spill & first-aid kit, and make sure all equipment and PPE are in good condition. Replenish items as needed.
- d. Have extra warning labels appropriate for the hazardous materials in the lab.
- e. Ensure all chemical and waste containers are properly labeled and secured in secondary containment.
[Request Hazardous Waste Pickups Here](#)
[Request Biohazardous Waste Pickups Here](#)
- f. Ensure that all research/academic samples and all areas which store samples (refrigerators, freezers, etc.) are properly labeled, secured & prioritized.
- g. Priority samples should be stored in refrigerator/freezer connected to building emergency generator. Extension cords are **NOT** an option. Consider sending critical research/academic samples offsite through arrangements with bio-repositories or non-local collaborators/colleagues.
- h. Only essential personnel will be allowed back on campus following an event. No one will be allowed access to buildings or labs until the building has been checked by FIU facilities and EH&S staff, and deemed safe for re-entry.
- i. Inventory and take pictures of all critical lab equipment.
- j. Check gas cylinders. Call vendor to pick up empty cylinders ASAP. Be sure all cylinders are stored properly.

2. Hurricane Watch

- a. Prepare to suspend experiments involving biological, radiological, or hazardous chemicals, and DO NOT begin any new experiments.
- b. Update all hazardous material inventories in the EHS Assist Online Database System.
- c. Autoclave or inactivate infectious waste.
- d. Determine the status of any laboratory items ordered, and make appropriate shipping/receiving arrangements.

3. Hurricane Warning

- a. Suspend all experiments involving biological, radiological, or hazardous materials.
- b. Due to the possibility of power outages, remove chemical, radiological, and biohazardous materials from laboratory fume hoods, and store them in sealed, break-resistant secondary containment.
- c. Place reactive chemicals, lab notes, research documents, and any other materials that cannot afford to be damaged in plastic, water-proof containers in a secured lab location.
- d. Shut down and unplug all equipment not required to be left on AND all equipment located in laboratory fume hoods/biosafety cabinets.
- e. Make arrangement for all mammalian research animals to be relocated to the AHC4 Vivarium.
- f. **DO NOT** turn off the laboratory hood /biosafety cabinet and ensure the sash is completely closed. Remove or relocate any items that may interfere with the complete closing of the sash.
- g. Check refrigerator/freezer contents and set the unit to the coldest setting.
- h. Ensure all containers of hazardous materials (chemical, biological, and radiological) are tightly closed, away from windows and off floors, bench tops and open shelves, stored in secured compatible storage units, and in secondary containment.
- i. Relocate glassware away from exterior windows.
- j. Ensure all compressed gas cylinders are secured and labeled.

Remember to plan ahead and implement the plan as soon as the hurricane watch is issued. If you have any questions, please contact FIU EH&S at (305) 348-2621 or ehs@fiu.edu.