

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. Ensure hazard and contact information is correct on emergency signage and posted on the door. To update emergency signage, click [here](#).
- c. Check spill & first-aid kits, and make sure all equipment and personal protective equipment (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. Ensure the contact information for designated essential personnel is up to date and on file with Human Resources.
- i. Inventory and take pictures of all critical lab equipment.
- j. Check gas cylinders. Call vendor to pick up empty cylinders ASAP.

2. Hurricane Watch

- a. Prepare to suspend experiments involving hazardous materials (biological, radiological, or hazardous chemicals), and DO NOT begin any new experiments.
- b. Update hazardous material inventories in the [EHS Chemical Inventory Tracking 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 hazardous materials.
- b. Due to the possibility of power outages, remove hazardous 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. Coordinate the relocation of all mammalian research animals 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 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.

4. Post Hurricane

- a. Only essential personnel will be allowed back on campus following an event. Do not try to access the building or lab until the "ALL CLEAR" signal has been issued and it has been deemed safe for re-entry.
- b. Once the building is deemed safe, check the lab area for any hazardous spills, leaks, damage to the space, or damage to equipment. Report any findings to Office of Research (ORED), EH&S, and Facilities.

- c. If there is a spill of hazardous materials, follow the [EH&S Spill Response Procedure](#). IMPORTANT! Make sure to have a hard copy of the spill response plan available in the event the electronic copy cannot be accessed.

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.