

12.0 CHAPTER 12 – LABORATORY HOUSEKEEPING

Good housekeeping in laboratories is essential to reducing risks and protecting the integrity of biological experiments. Routine housekeeping must be relied upon to provide work areas free of significant sources of contamination. Even though all laboratories are expected to maintain high standards of housekeeping, the standards required of each laboratory is proportional to the BSL designation of the laboratory. Hence, stricter standards are expected of a BSL-3 laboratory than they are of a BSL-2 laboratory.

Laboratory personnel are responsible for cleaning laboratory benches, equipment and areas that require specialized technical knowledge. Additional laboratory housekeeping concerns include:

- Keep the laboratory neat and free of clutter. Surfaces should be clean and free of infrequently used chemicals, glassware and equipment. Access to sinks, eyewashes, emergency showers and fire extinguishers must not be blocked.
- Properly dispose of chemicals and wastes. Old and unused chemicals should be disposed of promptly and properly. Call EH&S at 893-7705 for information. Provide a workplace that is free of physical hazards. Aisles and corridors should be free of tripping hazards. Attention should be paid to electrical safety, especially as it relates to the use of extension cords, proper grounding of equipment, avoidance of overloaded electrical circuits and avoidance of the creation of electrical hazards in wet areas.
- Remove unnecessary items on floors, under benches or in corners.
- Properly secure all compressed gas cylinders.
- Never use fume hoods for storage of chemicals or other materials.

12.1 Practical Custodial Considerations

- Always wet mop. Dry sweeping and dusting may lead to the formation of aerosols.
- Where vacuuming is required, the use of vacuums equipped with high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters is recommended in the biological research laboratory. Wet and dry units with HEPA filters on the exhaust are available from a number of manufacturers.

Questions pertaining to proper shipping and packaging of etiologic agents should be directed to the CDC Office of Health and Safety at (404) 639-3883.