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## **Procedure Summary**

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Environmental Health and Safety at WTAMU is composed of two distinct but integrated environmental safety departments that report to the Vice President of Research and Compliance. Academic and Research Environmental Health and Safety (AR-EHS) is responsible for research and academic related compliance, which includes laboratory and academic research and the associated compliance committees. Fire and Life Safety (FLS- EHS) is responsible for fire related compliance and conducts fire and life safety inspections of campus buildings and assists with the testing of all fire detection and suppression systems.

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## 1. Purpose

Laboratory research often involves potentially hazardous and regulated materials, such as biological and chemical agents, toxins, radioisotopes, and potentially hazardous equipment. For this reason, regular access to West Texas A&M University (WTAMU) laboratories and research support facilities is restricted to authorized laboratory personnel, determined and approved by the responsible laboratory Principal Investigator (PI) and the associated building supervisor (Dean or designee). The PI's have tremendous responsibility and accountability for lab safety and compliance and must supervise and provide training to all who work within the laboratory setting, including faculty, staff, and students whose presence is part of laboratory employment, faculty research collaboration, or student supervised research or coursework.

**Note:** *Laboratories at WTAMU are diverse in their scope, work, and structure. Some labs may have a PI and a lab manager who share health and safety responsibilities. EHS serves to assist PI's with lab safety needs.*

## 2. General

Safeguarding University resources from unauthorized access, misuse, removal, or injury is a duty of all faculty, staff and students. In laboratories, this obligation rests primarily with the PI; however, all laboratory personnel have a responsibility to take reasonable precautions against injury, theft or, misuse of materials, particularly those that could threaten the public. Laboratory security measures should be commensurate with the potential risks and imposed in a manner that does not unreasonably hamper research.

## 3. Responsibilities

**Regular** laboratory access is provided under supervision of the PI during times scheduled for courses or laboratory sessions, usually during regular university operational hours. Regular access provides the needed admission to the laboratory environment for WTAMU students to be successful in their academic pursuits.

A PI may request that **special** laboratory and laboratory building access be granted to a student, faculty, or staff member for research or teaching purposes. Special access allows a student, faculty, or staff member access to an identified laboratory and the associated laboratory building outside of normally scheduled hours. Special access requires authorization using the WTAMU Online Lock Shop Key Request form. Once the key request is received, it will be sent to obtain further approval from the building supervisor, the Vice President of Research and Compliance. Upon approval, the WTAMU Lock Shop and/or Buff Card Access Office will then be notified. The form can be found at the [Lock Shop Webpage](#).

**Special** laboratory access is a serious responsibility. Special access is granted only for the period of time needed to conduct the associated research. Access should be immediately removed upon completion of the associated research. Special access personnel must be under the supervision of the laboratory PI.

Access should be terminated by the PI, at any point he or she feels that: a) the original access purpose has been achieved or deemed to no longer be viable, b) an individual withdraws from the university, or c) for a situation in which laboratory safety is being compromised. Personnel receiving special access may also terminate access at any time by contacting their PI. The PI should then contact AR-EHS via email at [ar-ehs@wtamu.edu](mailto:ar-ehs@wtamu.edu) to terminate access. At the end of each semester, students who are not enrolled in continuing courses or others who are no longer employed by the university will be automatically removed from special access by the WTAMU Lock Shop. All those who are listed as having access to the lab (not including the PI), will have their access removed unless the PI notifies AR-EHS in writing that continued access is needed.

### 3.1 To Those Seeking Special Laboratory Access

As an individual with either regular or special laboratory access, you (the person seeking special access) must agree to be responsible for:

- Your health and safety.
- The health and safety of others around you.
- The security and the safe use of equipment and facilities that you have been authorized to use.
- Understanding and complying with all laboratory procedures, including the WTAMU Chemical Hygiene Plan (CHP) and any additional lab specific procedures.
- Training (provided by the PI) associated with all aspects of laboratory associated compliance and safety.
- Where access to a facility is restricted, such as by a card access or lock, you are **NOT** authorized to allow entry by people who do not have authorization for access to that facility or laboratory. This means that you are **NOT** allowed to unlock the facility or provide entry for someone else. Never prop doors open or allow other individuals to 'tail gate' or 'piggy-back' into an unauthorized area.

#### **Also, please note:**

- The primary investigator is responsible for determining whether the work requires special precautions, such as having two people in the same room for particular operations. For example, individuals conducting hazardous operations or using hazardous chemicals should not work alone. Another individual, approved by the lab PI, capable of coming to the aid of the worker should be in visual or audio contact. Contact UPD (911) in the event of an emergency or injury.
- You should locate posted information regarding emergency contact information and identify the location of fire extinguishers and eye washes (if appropriate) within the laboratory.
- You should review, understand, and follow all additional posted access, safety warnings, and safety procedures for the laboratory. If you do not understand a procedure, you must contact the lab PI for further instruction. You may not access the laboratory without understanding and agreeing to comply with all safety procedures and warnings.
- You should not attempt to operate equipment or apparatus unless you are specifically authorized and trained to use that equipment, and you have been advised of any hazards you may encounter.
- You must not attempt to modify or repair any equipment or apparatus unless you have been authorized to do so.
- You must keep the work area clean and tidy. When you have finished for the day, make sure all tools, chemicals, equipment, and supplies are returned to their proper storage (including electronic components back to drawers), and the equipment is shut down properly.
- Consumption of food and drink is prohibited in those laboratories where such restrictions are posted.

- Suitable clothing and footwear, as determined by the PI and the WTAMU CHP, must be worn in all laboratories. Safety eyewear must be worn in those laboratories where the requirement is posted. Neither the PI nor EHS will allow you access if you do not have suitable clothing, eyewear and footwear. Access may be terminated if you perform or act in ways that are unsafe. This may affect the completion of your assignments for that laboratory; it is your responsibility to ensure that you meet any safety requirements.
- Only students qualified/trained and approved by the PI to run equipment may do so. You are not to "teach" unapproved students how to use equipment.
- If you are granted access to the laboratory for a particular project, you are permitted to work on only that project and not on an unauthorized project.
- You are not permitted to bring materials and/or chemicals into the lab without approval from your PI. All chemicals and equipment must be procured through the appropriate WTAMU process (Contact AR-EHS via email at [ar-ehs@wtamu.edu](mailto:ar-ehs@wtamu.edu)).
- **DO NOT USE EQUIPMENT THAT IS BROKEN, DANGEROUS OR MALFUNCTIONING.** Report all such items to your PI.
- Anyone found under the influence of drugs or alcohol or whose behavior is impaired in such a way as to compromise safety will have access immediately removed, this can also include excessive fatigue or illnesses.

The PI and EHS will strictly enforce laboratory policies and safe use practices. Offenders will have their lab access revoked. Because this may limit your ability to complete laboratory assignments or research, a reduction in course grade or failure of the course may result.

#### 4. Lost Keys

Keys and card swipes are issued to a specific person and that person is responsible and personally held accountable for the use/misuse or loss of that key.

All lost keys and card swipes must be reported immediately to the appropriate authorities:

- During regular hours contact the Lock Shop (651-2145).
- After hours contact UPD (911).

Information given should include:

- Where key/swipe was lost or the last known location;
- Date lost;
- Key number; and
- Room the key opened.

The Lock Shop will determine the appropriate actions and will assign the costs for replacement based upon university security. The dollar amount for lost key replacement varies depending on the level of your key.

## 5. Training

West Texas A&M University Environmental Health and Safety will follow the Texas A&M University System Policy [33.05.02 Required Employee Training](#). Staff and faculty whose required training is delinquent more than 60 days will have their access to the Internet terminated until all trainings are completed. Only Blackboard and Single Sign-on will be accessible. Internet access will be restored once training has been completed. Student workers whose required training is delinquent more than 30 days will need to be terminated by their manager through Student Employment.

## 6. Record Retention

No official state records may be destroyed without permission from the Texas State Library as outlined in [Texas Government Code, Section 441.187](#) and [13 Texas Administrative Code, Title 13, Part 1, Chapter 6, Subchapter A, Rule 6.7](#). The Texas State Library certifies Agency retention schedules as a means of granting permission to destroy official state records.

West Texas A&M University Records Retention Schedule is certified by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. West Texas A&M University Environmental Health and Safety will follow [Texas A&M University Records Retention Schedule](#) as stated in the Standard Operating Procedure [61.99.01.W0.01 Records Management](#). All official state records (paper, microform, electronic, or any other media) must be retained for the minimum period designated.

### Contact Office

WTAMU Environmental Health and Safety  
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