



Approved: May 13, 2013  
Revised: October 4, 2023  
Next Scheduled Review: October 4, 2028

## **Procedure Summary**

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.

### **Table of Contents**

<b>1. Purpose.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Decontamination Procedure .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. Biological Contamination .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4. Chemical Contamination.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>5. Radiological Contamination .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>6. Mixed Contamination.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>7. Personal Items .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>8. Training.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>9. Record Retention.....</b>	<b>4</b>

## 1. Purpose

Reusable laboratory personal protective equipment (PPE) should be laundered regularly. There is always a risk that these items may become contaminated with chemical, biological, and/or radiological materials depending on the environment in which you work. Even if you suspect your laboratory items are **NOT contaminated, they should never be laundered at home.**

## 2. Decontamination Procedure

The following decontamination procedures are required prior to laundering **ANY** laboratory items that carry the possibility of contamination. Following these procedures help to ensure that the washer and dryer remain in proper working order; the washer, dryer, and subsequent loads are not at risk for contamination; and that we are following good environmental practices.

- *Disposable PPE should **NOT** be laundered in this facility.*
- *Items suspected to be **highly contaminated with biological material** should **NEVER** be laundered in this facility.*
- *Items suspected to be contaminated (in more than only a minute amount) with **chemical materials that are hazardous** should **NEVER** be laundered in this facility.*
- *Items suspected to be contaminated with **any amount of radiological material** should **NEVER** be laundered in this facility.*
- *-These items should be immediately bagged and labeled in an appropriate manner based on the contaminant.*

When in doubt, always contact EHS with any questions regarding appropriate handling of items and their disposal, 651-2270.

## 3. Biological Contamination

You are expected to know the biosafety level (BSL) classification of the organisms with which you work. PPE contaminated with biological material classified at the BSL-1 or BSL-2 level may be laundered in this facility. PPE suspected to be heavily contaminated with biological material at the BSL-1 or BSL-2 level should not be laundered here. Additionally, PPE contaminated with ANY biological material classified at the BSL-3 level or higher should never be laundered in this facility.

- BSL-1 contaminates – decontaminate contaminated areas on the items using a disinfectant applied at the appropriate concentration and for the appropriate contact time (example 10% bleach, let sit for 10 minutes) or by autoclaving **PRIOR** to washing. If the items are possibly contaminated with biological material in spore form, they must be autoclaved **PRIOR** to washing.
- BSL-2 contaminates – all items must be autoclaved **PRIOR** to washing. *Suggestion:* place clothing in a (dry) tray when autoclaving. Place a second tray in the autoclave and add water to this second tray.

Once items have been decontaminated, place them in the washing machine and add an appropriate High Efficiency detergent. In addition, you may add up to 1 cup of regular-strength bleach to the washer. If adding bleach, you must use the wash cycle marked 'WHITES' (See instructions for washer usage).

## 4. Chemical Contamination

You are expected to have an understanding of the chemicals with which you work. The specific method of handling will depend upon the type of chemical contaminate and the amount of contamination. When in doubt, always contact EHS.

- Contamination with non-hazardous chemicals that do not pose a unique health or safety hazard - items should be hand rinsed in the laboratory sink **PRIOR** to washing.
- Contamination with hazardous chemicals and/or those that pose a unique health or safety hazard – items that contain only a minute amount of contamination should be hand rinsed in the laboratory sink **PRIOR** to washing. Items that contain more than a minute amount of contamination must be bagged and labeled appropriately for disposal. Please contact EHS for disposal.

Once items have been decontaminated, place them in the washing machine and add an appropriate High Efficiency detergent. In addition, you may add up to 1 cup of regular-strength bleach to the washer. If adding bleach, you must use the wash cycle marked 'WHITES' (See instructions for washer usage).

## 5. Radiological Contamination

Any items suspected to be contaminated with radiological material are **NOT** to be laundered in this facility as the potential for cross-contamination of the washer and dryer and of subsequent laundry loads is too great. If you suspect your items are contaminated with radiological material, you should contact the Radiation Safety Officer through EHS 651-2270.

## 6. Mixed Contamination

- Biological and chemical – inactivate biological material using the steps outlined above prior to following chemical handling methods. If you are in doubt about the safety of autoclaving chemicals, please refer to the appropriate SDS.
- Biological and radiological – follow the radiological contamination guidelines above, and let the Radiation Safety Officer know there is also the risk of biological contamination on the item, 651-2270.
- Chemical and radiological – follow the radiological contamination guidelines above, and let the Radiation Safety Officer know there is also the risk of chemical contamination on the item, 651-2270.

***Any users found laundering laboratory items that have not been appropriately decontaminated PRIOR to washing/drying will lose ALL privileges in this facility.***

## 7. Personal Items

Absolutely **NO PERSONAL ITEMS** may be laundered in this facility, **NO EXCEPTIONS**. Any users found laundering personal items will lose ALL privileges.

**WHY?** Because it is unsanitary and subjects you and others to unnecessary health risks! Although items should be decontaminated prior to washing, we cannot say with certainty that the washer/dryer will never become contaminated. Laundering your personal items in this facility not only puts you at risk of contaminating yourself,

but also risks contaminating your home and your family members.

## **8. 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 internet access 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.

## **9. 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  
(806) 651-2270