Care of Laboratory Sinks

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# Purpose

<<<< This SOP is left in DOCX format so that you may edit it for your own laboratory>>>

The purpose of this SOP is to lay out the responsibilities, equipment and procedures required for care of laboratory sinks. If maintained properly and regularly, the amount of repairs to sinks and damage from leaking sinks and plumbing will decrease in frequency and cost. It is important that lab occupants understand how to turn the water off to a sink should a tap become damaged and to prevent flooding.

# Scope

This SOP applies to all persons prescribing the use of and requiring to use laboratory sinks.

# Responsibilities

## Supervisors

Supervisors are responsible for:

* **Reviewing this SOP on a regular basis. Review is to consider and mitigate the risks of spill, loss of containment and exposure or other harm. Refer to Performing Risk Assessments SOP.**
* Ensuring all laboratory sinks in their area are clean and in good working order.
* Ensure all dormant sinks in their area are flushed regularly to prevent drying out or molding of traps. Traps prevent sewer gasses from entering the laboratory.
* Ensure all traps are filled with water.
* Ensuring work orders are placed when sinks and surrounding benching require repair.
* Ensuring that all workers under their supervision are trained on and are proficient in performing the steps of this SOP.
* Knowing who in their department is assigned the responsibility of placing work orders, typically one administrative staff has the ability to do this on behalf of the entire department.

## Workers

Workers are responsible for:

* Following this SOP as approved by their supervisor to maintain functioning sinks.
* Reporting any damage and plumbing leakage immediately to their supervisor.

# Equipment Needed

* Distilled white vinegar or CLR or equivalent
* dishsoap
* tongs
* nylon scrub brushes
* old toothbrush
* J-cloths
* WD40

# Before You Begin

1. Ensure all clutter is removed from around and underneath the sink.
2. Take note of any asbestos labelling or other hazardous situations under or near the sink.
3. NEVER put any liquid nitrogen down drains.
4. NEVER put any dry ice down drains.
5. NEVER flush any hazardous chemicals down drains.
6. **Work orders** are more likely to become filled if they are LARGE. Check ALL the sinks in department or building quadrant, itemize a list of repairs required and submit that instead of one item.

# Checking the Shut Off Valves

1. Locate the water shut off valves underneath the sink.
2. Turn off both cold and hot water.
3. Turning right or clock-wise turns water OFF.
4. Turning left or counter-clockwise turns water ON.
5. “Righty-tighty, lefty-loosey”
   1. The valves should turn easily. If not, spray the threads with WD40 and let sit for an hour.
   2. If still stiff, repeat the process.
   3. If still stiff, contact your supervisor to request that a work order be placed.
6. Turn the water on and off multiple times, assuring that valves move smoothly.
7. Spray threads with WD40.
8. Note any moisture underneath the sink. If there is leakage from the plumbing, turn off the water and contact your supervisor to request that a work order to be placed.
9. If the water cannot be turned off, place a bucket underneath the leakage and contact your supervisor as above. A leak that cannot be controlled is priority matter no matter how small.

# Checking the Taps and Faucet

1. Turn water on to flush pipes and the drain.
2. Turn the water on and off multiple times, assuring that taps move smoothly.
   1. If you must tighten the taps excessively to stop the water, your taps likely require new washers. Contact your supervisor to have a work order placed.
   2. If your taps are difficult to turn either on or off, this must be fixed by engineering. Contact your supervisor to have a work order placed.
   3. If your taps leak when on or when off, this must be fixed by engineering. Contact your supervisor to have a work order placed.
3. Determine if your faucet is moveable. If it is difficult to move, **it is likely not meant to move**. Some laboratory faucet systems come in two varieties, swivel and non-swivel however they look the same.
4. If there is a nut at the base that is loose, tighten it hand-tight. Do not use a wrench.

# Cleaning the Sink

1. Using tongs or forceps, remove debris from the drain.
2. Place any sharps in a sharps container.
3. Remove all items from the sink.
4. Using dishsoap and warm water, scrub all parts of the sink with a nylon scrub brush.
5. Rinse thoroughly.
6. Harsh chemicals should never be required if a sink is maintained properly.

# Cleaning Rust and Calcium Deposits

1. Rust and calcium deposits are easy to remove.
2. Using a toothbrush and white vinegar clean the taps with constant circular motion.
3. Rinse taps.
4. Wrap a J-cloth around the base of the taps and saturate with white vinegar.
5. Let sit for one hour.
6. Lift the J-cloth and check the progress. Add more vinegar if required.
7. Using a nylon scrub brush, scrub the base of the taps until all calcium is removed.
8. For the sides of a sink, you can wallpaper the J-cloth to the side with vinegar or CLR and keep moist with vinegar or CLR for one hour. Alternatively, you can have a shallow container filled with CLR and scrub the sides of the sink with pure CLR.
9. Repeat these processes until all calcium deposits are gone. Note: cloudy or crusty glassware will become clear by soaking in water with added vinegar overnight. If it does not become clear, it is likely etched from harsh chemicals.
10. Rinse thoroughly.
11. Dry sink with paper towels.
12. To remove rust pits, spray rust with WD40 and let sit for 5 minutes, then scrub with a nylon scrub brush. Wash area with soap and water then rinse.
13. To protect your sink, spray a small amount of WD40 on a paper towel and shine all parts of the sink that your clothes or hands will not touch. This will put a protective layer of silicone on the surface.

# Maintaining a Clean Sink

1. For any sink that has been cleaned in this way, it is easy to maintain its calcium and rust-free condition by cleaning regularly with vinegar.
2. Clean sink with warm water and dishsoap using a nylon scrub brush.
3. Rinse thoroughly.
4. Mist sink with vinegar and scrub with a nylon scrub brush. Repeat as necessary.
5. Rinse thoroughly.
6. Dry sink with paper towel.

# Dormant or Unused Sinks

1. Any sink that is not in use should be run weekly to flush out the incoming water pipes and to keep the traps full.
2. Drain traps protect you from sewer gasses.
3. Maintain these sinks on the same schedule as your eyewash station checks.
4. These sinks should be kept clean and calcium and rust free.