Fridge and Freezer Cleanout

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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 and procedures required for emptying and thawing a fridge or freezer containing biohazardous samples or simply discarding a large amount of frozen samples.

# Scope

This SOP applies to all supervisors and their biohazard workers who use laboratory fridges and freezers to store research materials. This SOP applies to all types of cold units including cold rooms.

# 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 equipment is maintained in good repair.
* Ensuring all equipment is labelled appropriately with hazard signage and emergency contact information.
* Ensuring workers are trained on the proper procedures for equipment care and all steps of this SOP as it applies to their building.

## Biohazard Workers

Biohazard Workers are responsible for:

* Following the steps of this SOP and adhere to protocols and training as provided by their Supervisor
* Notifying their Supervisor of any malfunctioning equipment or hazardous situations.

# Planning for Waste Disposal

* Determine the volume of biohazard waste to be generated
  + If too many boxes or buckets to fit in the local waste closet, arrange for a pickup once complete
* Make a list of the types of waste to be discarded
  + Frozen biohazard liquids – biohazard bucket
  + Thawed biohazard liquids – biohazard bucket
  + Solid biohazard waste, no liquids – biohazard box
  + Sharps – biohazard sharps
  + Cytotoxics – appropriate receptacle plus special sticker signage
  + Anatomical wastes – appropriate receptacle depending on size
  + Non biohazard snow, ice and water from the cold unit – down the snk
  + Any solid waste that is not biohazardous goes into regular waste
* Obtain proper disposal receptacles
* Obtain absorbent materials such as paper towel or Yesterday’s News Kitty Litter if absorbing liquids
* If cleaning out clinical trial samples, create an inventory list before starting the procedure to ensure the correct samples are discarded
* If you require tracking and certificate of destruction, please contact the FHS Safety Office for special barcode stickers

# What to Keep

* Cardboard freezer boxes
* Styrofoam racks
* Ziplock bags
* Plastic freezer boxes
* All the above can be dried for re-use or donation to other labs

# Metal Racks

* Remove fully
* Thaw in sink
* Wash thoroughly – remove paper labels
* Let dry completely
* Erase sharpie labels with 70-95% ethanol
* Re-label and let ink dry

# Discard of Samples

* Deposit samples into the appropriate type of container
* Verify the maximum weight for each type of container
* Liquids make the containers heavy, therefore periodically check the weight and stop filling when the maximum weight is reached even if the container is not 2/3 full.
* Follow the protocol for a pickup for buckets or if the number of boxes will not fit in the waste closet.
* Only discard items into the biohazard waste containers that absolutely must go into them, we are charged BY WEIGHT of the containers
  + Therefore it is always preferable that you take the time to thaw, aspirate and bleach all liquids rather than discard using absorbent/boxes or buckets.
  + Remove non-biohazard wrappings or containers that are not contaminated
* Segregate reagents and chemicals from biohazards, dispose appropriately

# Cleaning the Unit

* FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUR UNIT, SOME SHOULD NOT BE TURNED OFF OR ALLOWED TO WARM
* Never use a hammer or sharp objects to de-ice the freezer. You will run the risk of puncturing the freon gas lines, resulting in a chemical spill, chemical exposure and costly replacement of the freezer.
* Inspect inside of unit for signs of spill, decontaminate as necessary
* Remove snow and ice per your routine procedures, discard snow and ice into sink
* Ensure paper towels are laid down if there is a potential for leakage
* Let unit come to room temperature, dry with paper towels, discard paper towels in regular waste
* Clean inside of unit per your routine procedures
  + If using a chemical or decon solution, ensure surfaces are washed with tap water afterwards and dried thoroughly
* Clean any filters or vacuum out condensers per your unit’s instructions
* Power unit on and ensure it comes to target temperature
* Record date of cleaning on the unit