

VAMHCS RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT SERVICE  
SRS Process Module

SRS PM 026

Effective Date: September 23, 2014

Laboratory Decommissions, Deactivation, and ReassignmentsApplicable Regulatory Context:

[VHA HB 1058.01 §9.f]:

f. **Laboratory Decommissions.** The PI or Laboratory Director must obtain authorization (i.e., permission) from the SRS and the ACOS for Research prior to decommissioning (including vacating, reassigning, converting to non-laboratory use, or otherwise modifying) existing laboratory space that requires identification and disposal of hazardous materials, infectious agents, or equipment between uses.

(1) The request for authorization to decommission laboratory space must be made in writing at least 1 month prior to implementation. Upon receiving such a request, the ACOS for Research must notify the VISN Safety Office to coordinate inventory and removal of hazardous materials, infectious agents, or equipment.

(2) Within 5 business days of discovering, receiving a credible report of, or otherwise becoming aware of any decommissioning implemented without the required authorization, the ACOS for Research must report the incident directly (without intermediaries) to the facility Director and the VISN Safety Office.

(3) The facility Director must report any unauthorized decommissioning to ORO CO within 5 business days after being notified.

1. This Process Module establishes a process for organized reassigning, vacating, and converting to non-laboratory use or otherwise modifying existing laboratory space.
2. For the purpose of this Process Module, the term “**DECOMMISSIONING**” pertains to reassigning, vacating, and converting to non-laboratory use or otherwise modifying existing laboratory space that **requires identification and disposal of hazardous materials, infectious agents, or equipment between uses**. Laboratories that are reassigned, moved or vacated but that do not involve hazardous agents are not considered “decommissioned”, but do require an organized process for disposition of the contents of the area.

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3. The Principal Investigator (PI) or Laboratory Director (LD) must obtain authorization (i.e., permission) from the SRS and the ACOS for Research prior to decommissioning (including vacating, reassigning, converting to non-laboratory use, or otherwise modifying) existing laboratory space that requires identification and disposal of hazardous materials, infectious agents, or equipment between uses.
4. If a laboratory space does not meet the requirements for “decommissioning” e.g. it is to be vacated or reassigned but does not contain hazardous agents of any type), the PI or LD is responsible to notify the ACOS/R&D and to provide a specific plan for disposition of the contents of the area. The plan should include the steps below, as applicable to the situation.
5. The Principle Investigator/Laboratory Director must submit a written plan to decommission laboratory space.
  - a. The request must be made in writing at least 6 weeks prior to implementation.
  - b. The request must be made to the ACOS/R&D.
  - c. The request must specify the following:
    - i. Laboratory room number(s)
    - ii. Hazards used in lab (biological, radiological, and chemical)
    - iii. Equipment inventory (including plan for turning in, moving or transferring)
    - iv. Complete and current chemical inventory (including plan for turning in, disposing or transferring)
    - v. The action proposed (reassignment, vacating, converting to non-laboratory use)
    - vi. the projected date of the action.
  - d. The PI/LD must also include the plan for implementation of the proposed decontamination/decommissioning plan, including the PI’s/LD’s plan for personnel and resources needed to accomplish the decommissioning.
  - e. Use “Principle Investigator’s/Laboratory Director’s Request for Authorization to Decommission a Laboratory Space” as a tool for completing a plan.
6. The ACOS/R&D (or designee) reviews the plan and requests additional information from the PI/LD as necessary.
7. The ACOS/R&D (or designee) sends the proposed decommissioning plan to SRS and VISN Safety Officer for review and comment. In addition, as applicable, the ACOS/R&D (or designee) sends the proposed decommissioning plan for review and comment to:
  - a. Radiation Safety Officer
  - b. Chemical Hygiene Officer
  - c. Infection Control
  - d. Environmental Health & Safety
  - e. Others as applicable.

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8. Applicable entities in #6 return their comments to ACOS/R&D (or Designee).
9. ACOS/R&D (or Designee) harmonizes all comments into a final plan. ACOS or designee seeks additional advice from specialists as needed. ACOS/R&D may accept, reject or modify advice provided by reviewers.
10. ACOS approves final plan and sends to PI/LD for implementation.
11. VISN and local VAMHCS forms and checklists are used to document the process.
  - a. The following forms must be posted in the laboratory area in order to be signed-off by applicable personnel involved with the decommissioning:
    - i. VISN "Laboratory decommissioning Checklist", and
    - ii. VAMHCS "Signature Sheet for Laboratory Decommissioning Process".
  - b. The completed, signed forms are retained by the PI/LD and the R&D Service (copies).
12. Within 5 business days of discovering, receiving a credible report of, or otherwise becoming aware of any decommissioning implemented without the required authorization, the ACOS for Research must report the incident directly (without intermediaries) to the Medical Center Director and the VISN 5 Safety Office.
13. The Medical Center Director must report any unauthorized decommissioning to the appropriate ORO RO within 5 business days after being notified.