

Laboratory Preparation for Tropical Storms or Hurricanes

Preparation for an inclement weather event in the laboratory should begin as soon as a storm enters or forms in the Gulf of Mexico. Anytime a Storm hits the coast and moves northward Rice University could see wind damage, significant rainfall and possible campus flooding. Below are some guidelines that should be followed prior to landfall.

1. Check the accuracy of emergency contacts and telephone numbers on the lab door. Update this information at:
http://safety.rice.edu/Chemical_Safety/Laboratory_Door_Sign_Generator/.
2. Ensure all chemical and materials are marked with a waterproof marker.
3. Cap all chemicals and seal all open containers. Best practice is to use a container with a water tight sealable lid
4. Place all flammable or combustible chemicals in cabinets.
5. Secure all radioactive sources, radioactive isotopes, and DEA regulated drugs. Make sure all inventories of these materials are up to date.
6. Shut down all laboratory equipment which is not essential. Ovens, solvent stills, stir plates, biohazard hoods, incubators, pumps, and lasers. Instruments that are sensitive to power fluctuations should be disconnected from the wall to prevent unwanted power surges,
7. Ensure that refrigerators and freezers with sensitive materials are on the emergency power circuit.
8. Stop all experiments, reactions, or anything that may still be running in the next 48 hours. Ensure all biological storage dewars are filled with liquid nitrogen in case of a prolonged outage.
9. Shut off the Natural Gas manifold in the laboratory where available.
10. Move all electronic equipment from windows, and elevate all equipment and cardboard boxes 2-3" from the floor. This is critical in basement laboratories and flood prone areas.
11. Secure all cylinders by ensuring they are strapped or chained to the wall or bench and close the valve, remove the regulator and cap the cylinder stem.
12. Close the sash on all chemical fume hoods.
13. Make sure that all exits and corridors are clear.

Someone from the Environmental Health and Safety Department will be walking through the buildings prior to the event to ensure compliance. If you have any questions, please contact your building administrator or Environmental Health and Safety at X4444 or cavender@rice.edu