CORONAVIRUS PREPAREDNESS
LABORATORY EMERGENCY SHUTDOWN PROCEDURE

In preparation for potential closure of the UTSA campus, as a result of coronavirus transmission mitigation, the Laboratory Safety Division has prepared the following document to assist with the safe shutdown of laboratories until normal operations can resume. This list is by no means complete and may be adapted to your specific facility needs.

PRE-PLANNING

Identify an emergency contact for the lab and post their name and contact details clearly on the facility door.

Consider planning only short term experiments until further information on the epidemic control is released.

Check that essential freezers, incubators etc. are connected to emergency outlets.

Create a recovery plan in the event that essential cultures or stocks are lost due to power failures etc.

Check any special operating procedures for your equipment before an emergency occurs.

Do not allow waste to build up, submit waste requests early and frequently.

SHUTDOWN

Close fume hood sashes.

Cap all chemical bottles as appropriate and submit any waste for pickup.

Turn off all non-essential electrical devices. Leave refrigerators and freezers on and make sure the doors are closed. Check the disconnects of large LASERs, radio frequency generators, etc. It may be necessary to check to ensure that essential equipment is plugged in to the power receptacles supplied by the emergency generator (usually orange or red).

Turn off all sensitive equipment that could be affected by a sudden power loss, remember that even equipment connected to emergency power will experience a power loss while the switch to the emergency power is made.

Turn off all gas cylinders at the tank valves. Note: If a low flow of an inert gas is being used to "blanket" a reactive compound or mixture, then the lab worker may want to leave the flow of gas on. Clearly label gas cylinders that must be left on.
Check all cryogenic vacuum traps (Nitrogen, Carbon dioxide, and solvent) and empty. The evaporation of trapped materials may cause dangerous conditions. Check all containers of cryogenic liquids to ensure that they are vented to prevent the buildup of internal pressure.

Check all pressure, temperature, air, or moisture sensitive materials and equipment. This includes vacuum work, distillations, glove boxes used for airless/moistureless reactions, and all reactions in progress. Terminate all reactions that are in progress and shutdown equipment.

If experimental animals are in use contact LARC to ensure emergency provisions are in place.

Re-fill any liquid nitrogen containers used for storing cell cultures or other stocks.

Clean and shutdown biosafety cabinets, disconnect and clean vacuum traps.

Determine how long equipment, and storage, dependent on gas cylinders or liquid nitrogen can run before replacement will be needed. Notify the department Chair and Laboratory Safety Division.