

Management of Common Use and Interior Laboratory Areas

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Research Safety

Office of Research

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

I. Purpose & Scope

This SOP describes the policies and procedures the Office of Research Integrity & Safety (ORIS) uses to determine responsibility for shared research and teaching laboratories at the University of Georgia (UGA) as well as interior laboratory areas a subrooms. Deviations from this policy may be considered by ORS on a case-by-case basis.

II. Responsibilities & Definitions

- A. Chemical/Lab Safety Professionals** – The Office of Research Integrity and Safety (ORIS) lab safety group is the first point of contact for many researchers when they are seeking guidance with how to manage their chemical inventory. They are responsible for performing periodic safety assessments and verifying that a researcher's chemical inventory is accurate and up to date. With shared spaces, there is an additional responsibility of verifying that chemical inventories are properly delineated between researchers when necessary.
- B. Chematix** – Chematix is the database that UGA uses for the management of chemical inventories and active chemical laboratories and laboratory support spaces. For a room to be listed as an active laboratory in Chematix it must have someone designated as a Principal Investigator and someone listed as a secondary contact. Chemicals can only be stored in active Chematix laboratories and they are assigned to storage locations within the lab. These storage locations can be named anything as long as the storage location name clearly indicates where in the lab an item is located.
- C. Environmental Safety Division (ESD)** – ESD manages the Chematix chemical inventory system and is responsible for transferring inventories and setting up laboratories and their storage locations within the database.
- D. Principal Investigator (PI)** – The PI is responsible for informing ORIS of their intention to either share chemical inventories or keep their chemical inventories separate within Chematix. Additionally, for some common use areas, a "PI of record" may be selected as a primary point of contact. This PI of record is listed as the point of contact within Chematix and on the Caution door sign; this PI is also responsible for ensuring that any safety deficiencies noted on the safety assessments from the Lab Safety Group are properly remediated.
- E. Department Heads or Center Directors** – Department Heads and Center Directors may be selected as a PI of record for areas that are shared by multiple PIs in a department

and are not traditional laboratory spaces. Such spaces could be instrument rooms, freezer farms, autoclave rooms, and gas cylinder storage rooms

III. Shared Instrument Rooms, Freezer Rooms, Cylinder Manifold Rooms

A. Areas such as these typically have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Used by enough PIs to make individual delineations of space either unnecessary or impractical.
- Bar coded chemicals are rarely if ever stored in these areas
- Contain equipment that ORIS deems relevant to laboratory safety assessments but that may not be the distinct responsibility of a particular researcher.
- Examples include but are not limited to gas cylinder storage rooms, sample storage rooms, autoclave/dishwashing rooms, environmental chambers.

B. These areas will be handled in the following way:

- The department head or center director will be designated as the PI of record.
- A space will be open under the PI of record in Chematix and the door sign will indicate the PI of record, a secondary lab contact, and their contact information. The secondary contact can be another PI or some other frequent user of the space.
- The department head or center director will receive all communication from ORIS regarding any safety concerns related to these spaces.
- While barcoded chemicals are rarely stored in these spaces, if they ever are, then a storage location will be created in Chematix and will be named in such a way so that it is clear who the responsible PI is.
 - For example, if Dr. Smith is the department head and room 101 is a shared space used by several researchers in the department, then the lab will be listed with Dr. Smith listed as the PI of record in Chematix. If Dr. Jones begins storing chemicals in room 101 in a fume hood for instance, then a storage location will be attached to the Chematix lab record that will read “Fume Hood – Jones” or something similar. Dr. Jones will also be listed as lab user for the space.

C. If a department head or center director would like to defer responsibility of these spaces to another PI within the department, this is acceptable as long as ORIS receives, in writing, a notification from that PI agreeing to assume responsibility for the space.

IV. Shared Chemical Laboratories

A shared chemical laboratory is an area designed for laboratory-scale experimentation that is utilized by more than one PI and/or research group performing either related or unrelated procedures. These areas can take one of the following forms:

A. Clearly delineated research areas and chemical storage areas for all PIs within the laboratory or laboratory suite.

- In this situation each PI utilizing the space will have an area assigned to their name within the Chematix system.

- Each PI has their own chemicals and/or chemical storage areas. These should be clearly marked or labeled in the lab to avoid confusion during chemical reconciliations. From time to time, sharing of chemicals is to be expected but for the most part, it is understood that the PI responsible for that particular chemical does not change.
 - ORIS will fill out the Caution sign with the contact information for all PIs utilizing the space. The hazards listed on the door sign will combine the inventories for all users of the space.
 - ORIS lab safety professionals will make every effort to perform the annual safety assessments for these types of spaces separately. Each PI is considered a PI of record and they will each receive their own safety reports detailing their area's individual concerns.
- B.** A laboratory used by multiple researchers that are sharing equipment and sharing chemicals equally. In these areas it is usually difficult to determine which chemicals belong to which researcher and individual research groups do not have clearly defined areas within the lab.
- For these areas, one PI should be selected as the PI of record. This PI will be listed as the PI of record within Chematix and on the door signs but will only oversee their own chemical inventory to the extent possible. If other researchers begin storing chemicals in the room, then storage locations will be created and named as described in Section III.B of this SOP.
 - If there are no storage locations created as described above then it is assumed that the PI of record is responsible for all chemicals stored and used within the space.
 - During annual safety assessments, any communication from ORIS will be sent to the PI of record (and their laboratory's secondary contact if listed). Any information deemed relevant to other PIs sharing the space should be relayed by the PI of record. This includes safety deficiencies noted on the annual safety assessments. While it is not the PI of record's responsibility to correct safety concerns caused by the practices of others sharing the space, it is their responsibility to ensure that they are corrected within the corrective action period.
- C.** A laboratory used by a single researcher where chemicals from other lab(s) are being stored. The lab is used by these other researchers only to store chemicals and for nothing else.
- The PI that is the primary user of the space will be the PI of record listed in Chematix and on the door sign. The hazards listed on the door sign will be the combined hazards of all the chemicals stored in the space.
 - The chemical storage areas within the lab should be clearly labeled with the name of the PI they belong to so that they are properly assigned during the annual reconciliation. These storage areas will be listed as storage areas within

the main laboratory within Chematix. Chemical storage areas in Chematix will be named as described in Section III.B of this SOP.

- ORIS will conduct safety assessments and relay all communication only through the PI of record.

V. Shared Chemical Storage Areas

These areas are only used for chemical storage and are not designed for experimentation. They are used for storage of chemicals for multiple laboratories within a single or multiple departments. These areas will be handled similarly to the shared instrument rooms and freezer rooms outlined in Section III.C of this SOP.

VI. Concerns Regarding Unfamiliarity With Hazards

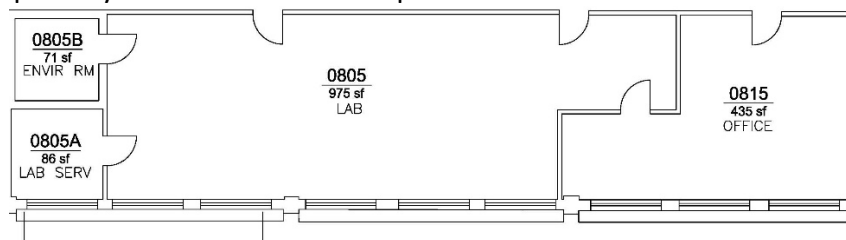
ORIS recognizes that the sharing of laboratory spaces can occasionally lead to interactions between many different disciplines that have established safety protocols for handling the types of laboratory hazards specific to their area. This can lead to confusion or concern from other users that may be unfamiliar with certain hazards. For example, some users of a dishwasher room may not handle biohazardous material on a routine basis and may therefore be unaware of autoclave procedures and biohazard waste protocols. Similarly, some researchers in a shared lab facility may work with radioactive materials while others utilizing the space do not.

ORIS is here to assist with awareness and training in these types of situations. Laboratories are encouraged to request such training at any time; doing so will not only raise awareness of various hazards in your surroundings but it also will expand the knowledge base on campus to allow for quick identification of potentially unsafe practices. Contacts for various oversight groups can be found at the end of this document.

It is also recommended that buildings or research facilities that house departments of various disciplines, where disciplinary overlap is common or likely, form a building safety committee that can quickly address concerns stemming from multi-disciplinary use.

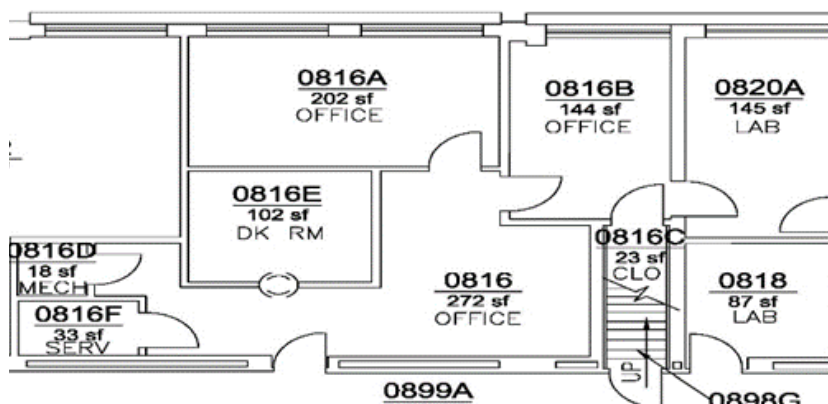
VII. Interior Areas

Interior areas are spaces with a unique room number that do not have a direct entrance from a main corridor. There is only a single way in and out of the room and it is usually through a primary lab area. In the example below:



- Rooms 805A and 805B are considered interior areas. If a single PI is responsible for all of the 805 spaces, the chemical inventories shall be listed in Chematix under the main space (805) with 805A and 805B listed as storage locations. And the space(s) will have a single safety assessment record.

- If these spaces are not listed under a single PI, they will be treated as separate areas with separate chemical inventories and safety assessment records.
- In this second example, rooms 816A, 816D, 816E, and 816F are considered interior areas and would be treated as part of 816. However, rooms 816B and 820A are accessible from more than one room so these two areas would be treated separately.



VIII. **Contacts**

Office of Research Safety: 706-542-5288

Chemical/Lab Safety: 706-542-9088

Radiation Safety: 706-542-0107

Biosafety: 706-542-5563