

**North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System Research Service
RESEARCH SERVICE (151)**

**Standing Operating Procedures (SOP)
General Cleanliness for Office and Laboratory Areas
January 29, 2025**

The North Florida South Georgia Veterans Health System (NF/SGVHS) Research Service ensures implementation of system-wide comprehensive environment of care practices and a safe, sanitary, and high-quality environment consistent with Veterans Health Administration policy. This document provides guidance for maintaining a clean work environment for all Research Service space. It is an important responsibility of research investigators/staff to keep their research labs/offices clean and safe.

When entering a lab or office, a clean and orderly workplace should be noted. All research service personnel should maintain a clean work environment. At the end of each tour of duty inspect all work areas to ensure that all soiled areas are clean, no biological or chemical hazards are present, and that all supplies, materials, and chemicals are returned to their appropriate storage location.

EMS Service can be contacted at Ext. 10-2301 for the regular cleaning of all work surfaces and floors, and to empty trash (Note: housekeeping does not have access to research labs or offices, so lab personnel will need to provide access). All Research Service personnel are to keep their work areas clear of clutter and obstructions. Lab coats, handbags, and other personnel items must be stored properly in the designated area. Do not store these items on the workbench tops, near chemicals, or near lab equipment that is in use.

The following guidelines should be followed:

Laboratory Housekeeping Guidelines

- No food or drinks are allowed in research labs working with hazardous chemicals.
- Remove all cardboard boxes from the floor (metal or plastic material can be used under cardboard boxes on floor, but not wood material)
- Do not use extension cords.
- Ensure there are no tripping hazards.
- Do not fill sharps containers more than $\frac{3}{4}$ full, and promptly replace sharps containers that are $\frac{3}{4}$ full.
- Do not dispose of biohazard waste or used gloves in regular (white) trash bags.
- Ensure all regular and biohazard trash is emptied daily by contacting EMS at Ext. 10-2301 (housekeeping does not have access to research labs, so lab staff must be present).
- Do not discard the soiled gloves and any PPE in common trash, deposit used gloves and the PPE in biohazard waste container.
- Do not bring spent soft drink cups into the labs, and they shall not be discarded in the lab trash containers.

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- Promptly clean up all spills, including water spills and ice, and properly dispose of all spilled chemicals or biological following the SOPs.
- Maintain a clean lab environment by cleaning benchtops at the completion of each task and the end of the day, dusting benchtops at least every-other-week, and disposing of or recycling packing materials and empty cartons at the completion of the workday.
- Do not block access to safety showers or eyewashes, fire extinguishers, or electrical outlets/controls.
- Ensure all exits are unblocked.
- Ensure there is no ice build-up in any lab freezer, if ice is present then defrost the freezer. Lab freezers require defrosting several times per year to reduce ice build-up.

Office Housekeeping Guidelines

- Discard food and drink wrappers, unwanted food, and perishable that is expired.
- Clean out refrigerators of old food and drinks every week.
- Disinfect surfaces of the refrigerator every month.
- Clean coffee pots weekly and discard old coffee grounds daily.

Cleanliness Inspections

Inspections will be performed at least twice yearly to ensure labs are in compliance with these guidelines. The Research Service Safety Officer, Chemical Hygiene Officer, and Administrative Officer will coordinate these random area lab/office inspections. Documentation of inspection findings will be reported to the investigators/staff who occupy the space for remediation and to Research Service leadership.

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