

Appendix M: Laboratory Security Issues

The security of research laboratories is the responsibility of each and every staff member. All areas where research is conducted utilizing hazardous material, radioactive material, biohazardous material, and other sensitive materials should have controlled access for authorized personnel only.

Laboratories using biohazardous materials must be kept secured at all times. Federal and State guidelines require laboratory doors and hazardous material areas have, at a minimum, limited access and require the areas be kept locked when no laboratory staff are present. Security recommendations also include having a routine intra-laboratory inventory mechanism for identifying missing biological, hazardous or radioactive material inventory. Track the use of this material and report any missing inventory to MUPD and Environmental Health and Safety.

Laboratories can experience thefts, many of which occur because labs are unattended or doors are left unlocked. Most laboratory thefts are laptops, wallets, purses, or other personal items but lab supplies and equipment can also be stolen and resold. Thieves are not careful as they quickly move through a lab taking items of value and as they do they frequently do damage to ongoing projects that can take weeks or even months to reproduce. Principal Investigators or Supervisors need to assure laboratory security against theft, terrorism, larceny, and to remain in compliance with various regulations:

1. All staff should wear university identification badges.
2. Approach any visitors that appear to be wandering in laboratory areas and ask if you can help direct them.
3. Lock all equipment (e.g. freezers, cabinets, incubators, and scintillation counters) that may contain biohazardous material and are located in hallways or areas outside of laboratories.
4. Keep laboratory doors closed at all times (they also provide correct air flow and fire safety).
5. Lock laboratory doors when lab staff are not present.
6. Post and keep current the "Emergency Notification Signage" on laboratory doors. Include name of responsible person, a second person knowledgeable with the laboratory, and a 24-hour contact number (MUPD).
7. If shipping biological materials, assure packages prepared for shipment are securely locked if unattended to prevent theft.