

Procedure for Facilities and Environmental Conditions

1.0 Purpose – To ensure that the environmental conditions of the State Crime Laboratory (Laboratory) facilities do not adversely affect or invalidate the analysis of forensic evidence.

2.0 Scope – This procedure applies to all facilities within the Laboratory.

3.0 Definitions

- **Clean area** – An area of the Laboratory which is kept free of open evidence and chemicals.
- **Incompatible** – Activities or analyses which interfere or adversely affect other activities or analyses in the same area.
- **Work area** – Any area of the Laboratory in which chemicals are present or evidence is examined.

4.0 Procedure

4.1 Facility Criteria

- 4.1.1** Employees shall have workspace appropriate for the job to be performed. Sufficient space shall be provided near work areas for storage of supplies, equipment, and tools. Storage areas for samples shall accommodate retention of samples for the time and conditions needed to protect their integrity.
- 4.1.2** Separate storage areas of sufficient size shall be present in Laboratory areas to ensure that evidence, glassware, instrumentation, supplies, reagents, solvents, chemicals, hazardous or regulated wastes, and reference standards and materials are properly stored.
- 4.1.3** Chemicals and solvents shall be stored based on compatibility and in accordance with the manufacturer's guidance, Safety Data Sheet (SDS), and the fire code.
- 4.1.4** If possible, separate rooms shall be used for work areas and clean areas. Otherwise, Sections shall establish a means of ensuring and preserving a distinction between work areas and clean areas.
- 4.1.5** Airflow is designed to minimize or prevent cross contamination. Exhaust hoods and biological safety cabinets shall be provided and shall have sufficient airflow to provide a safe environment. Airflow in the hoods shall be monitored and calibrated.
- 4.1.6** Adequate lighting shall be provided in all work areas.
- 4.1.7** Adequate plumbing and wiring shall be available and accessible for all tasks.
- 4.1.8** Heating, cooling, and general ventilation shall be adequate.
- 4.1.9** De-ionized water systems shall be provided as needed and shall be maintained properly.
- 4.1.10 Firearms** - Any area where the presence of a firearm may compromise testing must be clearly identified with a sign. Laboratory employees who are sworn agents with the SBI may not wear their duty weapons in these areas.

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- 4.2 Physical Security** - The Laboratory Security Plan is described in detail in the Procedure for Laboratory Security.
- 4.3 Housekeeping** - Laboratory areas shall be maintained in a clean and orderly manner to prevent contamination and to facilitate the efficiency of operations.
- 4.4 Laboratory Facility Protocol** - This section addresses facility-wide issues not generally covered in other procedures.
- 4.4.1 Personal audio/visual equipment** - Personal audio/visual equipment may be permitted at the discretion of the Forensic Science Manager.
- 4.4.2 Pets** - No pets of any type shall be allowed within any Laboratory facility. A service animal is not a pet and is exempt from this prohibition.
- 4.4.3 Common area authority**
- 4.4.3.1 Common areas within section assigned space** - Guidelines for furnishings and decor in the common Laboratory areas within Section assigned space shall be left to the discretion of the Forensic Science Manager.
- 4.4.3.2 Common areas in non-section assigned space** - Furnishing and decorating lobbies, hallways, display cases, and other areas shall be coordinated with the Lab Director.
- 4.4.3.3 Main conference rooms (Raleigh Lab)** - Use of the main conference rooms shall be scheduled through the SharePoint Calendar.
- 4.4.4 Tobacco Products** - In accordance with State law, all Laboratory facilities shall be tobacco-free. Tobacco use shall be permitted only in designated areas outside of the facility (exterior entrances/exits and parking lot). All tobacco debris shall be disposed of in proper receptacles.
- 4.4.5 Parking** - Employees shall park in non-reserved parking spaces on a first come, first serve basis.
- 4.4.6 Locker Rooms and Weight Room (Raleigh facility)** - All athletic facilities are common use areas and shall be maintained in a clean and neat manner by those utilizing the facility. Prior to the use of any athletic facility or equipment, the liability waiver shall be signed and returned to the Laboratory Safety Officer.
- 4.4.7 Use of Portable Ladders** – prior to each use, ladders shall be inspected for the following:
- Steps, Rungs, Uprights and Braces
 - Loose steps or rungs
 - Loose fasteners or other metal parts
 - Cracked, split, bent, or broken upright braces, steps, or rungs
 - Damaged or worn nonslip bases
 - Hinges
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- Loose hinge
- Loose / bent spreader
- Spreader stop broken
- General
 - Rusted or corroded spots.
 - Wobbly

5.0 Records

- Maintenance, certification, and performance records on chemical hoods and bio-safety cabinets
- Maintenance records of de-ionized water systems
- Liability waivers for athletic facility/weight room

6.0 Attachments – N/A

Revision History		
Effective Date	Version Number	Reason
06/01/2021	6	4.4.3.3 – updated for SharePoint 4.4.6, 5.0 – updated waiver record information 4.4.7 – added section on portable ladder use