INDIANA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Indiana University School of Medicine Policy on Cold Space Utilization

as-sp-0008

About This Policy

Effective Dates:
03-18-2022

Last Updated:
10-31-2023

Responsible University Administrator:
Jamie Dimond Executive Associate Dean, Finance and Administration

Policy Contact:
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Scope

This policy and associated procedure pertain to all researchers, scientists, staff, and students at the Indiana University School of Medicine (IUSM).

Policy Statement

A cold/environmental room is defined as space maintained at 4 ^{o} C degrees and is available for researchers to store materials requiring low temperatures. Items stored in these areas many times are materials and items not used frequently, not appropriate for common refrigerators, or are of higher quantities unable to store elsewhere. Cold room spaces are not to be used for materials or items that do not require low-temperature storage. To protect IUSM research and prevent cold/environmental room issues from occurring these guidelines are to be followed:

- Cardboard and styrofoam are porous and may harbor mold. No cardboard or styrofoam should be stored in cold rooms. Instead, use securely closed, air-tight plastic containers. If the item is not conducive to being stored outside its original cardboard or styrofoam container, then place the whole container inside the plastic bin.
- Hazardous chemicals, flammable solvents, volatile acids, compressed gases, consumable supplies, or equipment (unless used for keeping samples cold) should not be stored in cold rooms.
- Food or beverages should not be stored in cold rooms, but instead, outside of the laboratory.
- Items stored in cold/environmental spaces should be properly labeled and stored in the laboratory's assigned space.
- Unused samples, unused materials, or expired items should not be stored in cold spaces. These should be disposed of properly per IUPUI environmental health and safety guidelines.
- No waste is to be stored in cold spaces. Dispose of waste appropriately outside the room.
- All cold/environmental cold room rooms are centrally monitored with an alarm unit. Departments/Units have a responsibility in protecting their research by responding to any alarms and managing research content per the IUSM policy and procedure referenced in the Related Information below.

- Signage on the door to remind researchers of the standards.

All cold/environmental rooms are monitored by Sonicu monitoring system and managed by the School of Medicine. If you are storing important samples in a cold room you need to add your contact information to that cold room's call tree by notifying the building coordinator.

It is the expectation that researchers self-maintain cold/environmental room use, including keeping their assigned area organized, storing cold items properly, cleaning assigned spaces routinely, and disposing of waste and unused/expired items. When a cold room is abandoned or no longer in use, the IUPUI laboratory close-out procedures are to be followed.

Reason For Policy

The purpose of this policy is to document cold room utilization guidelines for all IUSM managed cold/environmental room spaces. These IUSM-wide guidelines will ensure consistency in cold room management to minimize contamination risk and structural compromise, maximize safety and sustain operational efficiency of these resources. These guidelines are essential to maintain a safe and healthy cold room environment.

Procedure

At least twice annually, IUSM Facility Operations personnel will conduct a walk-through of all cold rooms. During the cold room walkthroughs, the reviewer is monitoring for plastic bin use, cleanliness, and appropriateness of items being stored and to ensure that no cardboard or Styrofoam are being placed inside the cold rooms. In addition, the structural integrity of the room is also monitored. If severe issues are found, the departments utilizing the cold room and the building coordinator will be notified of policy violations. Immediate action will be expected to resolve those issues.

It will be the responsibility of the users of the cold room to periodically monitor the cleanliness and if necessary clean and wipe down surfaces and equipment that begin to have mold growth by spraying a Clorox solution and wiping down the affected surfaces.

Sanctions

Should these guidelines not be followed, several health and safety issues may occur including mold growth, chemical safety hazards, or structural integrity of the cold room. Mold may contaminate samples and track to other parts of the laboratory. Improperly stored chemicals could lead to exposure or illness. Excess moisture or spilled items may cause rust, corrosion, or other physical room issues. Any of these issues could compromise the laboratory's ability to conduct research. Should these guidelines not be followed, the laboratory that stores the prohibited porous items will be financially liable for any mold remediation. The mold remediation process is done by an outside, school-approved contractor and in extreme cases, the cost can exceed over $10,000.

Additional Contacts

Environmental Health and Safety: 317-274-2005 ehs@iupui.edu
SOM Facility Operations Manager: Amber Anderson 317-278-9289 anderamm@iu.edu
Associate Director, Space Planning: Marty Schuessler 317-278-4767 mwschues@iu.edu

History

1. as-res-0013 created 08 November 2021.
2. Policy completed 06 January 2022.
3. Policy sent to EADs 22 January 2022.
4. Policy approved by EADs 16 February 2022.
5. Policy number changed to as-sp-0008 31 October 2023.