

University of Houston

Research Continuity Checklist for University Researchers and Research Centers

Disruptions to research activities, whether due to personnel turnover, temporary absences, or larger emergencies like hurricanes, power outages, or pandemics, can significantly jeopardize research progress. The University of Houston strives to ensure its operations are performed efficiently with minimal disruption through a wide range of emergencies. This is done through its [Continuity of Operations program](#). Take a moment to consider the following scenarios and how your research and or research center may be impacted:

- A fire incident occurs in your laboratory or a neighboring laboratory, causing damage and halting operations for an extended period.
- A hurricane strikes Houston, leading to widespread power outages, infrastructure damage, and restricted campus access.
- A pandemic affects half of your research personnel, severely limiting your laboratory's capacity.

While such events may be infrequent, they could have a profound impact on your research and your team, if you are not prepared. The Office of Emergency Management has developed this checklist to assist researchers and research centers address areas of continuity planning. This checklist is designed to assist principal investigators, laboratory managers, and research personnel ensure vital research operations can continue or quickly resume following a disaster or major disruption. With proper planning, you can reduce the impact of emergencies and return to normal operations more efficiently. Ensure you have considered the following:

Identify Critical Research Activities

- ☐ Maintain a listing of essential experiments, data collection, or time-sensitive processes.
- ☐ Identify laboratory needs that are required for research to continue (i.e. samples, datasets, functioning safety equipment, freezers, refrigerators electricity, water, research personnel, specialty vendors or supplies, etc.)

Designate & Train Essential Personnel

- ☐ Identify key personnel and designees needed to maintain critical functions and processes.
- ☐ Review and train personnel on pre-established emergency procedures for powering down/restarting equipment.
- ☐ Confirm all team members have been cross trained on all laboratory and research center activities to ensure continuity.

Develop Your Laboratory Preparedness Plans

- ☐ Ensure all [laboratory emergency preparedness](#) actions have taken place.
- ☐ Ensure emergency procedures have been created and accessible to personnel.
- ☐ Refer to Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Guidance for Pausing Research Laboratory Activities

Maintain Updated Contact Lists

- ☐ Ensure a listing of emergency contacts (name, phone, email for the laboratory/research center is maintained and accessible.
 - Laboratory Personnel
 - Internal UH Departments
 - Vendors

Back-up Your Data

- ☐ Use university cloud storage or secure university servers to automatically back up data.

Plan for Supply Chain Disruption

- ☐ Maintain proper inventory of essential supplies on campus
- ☐ Identify alternate vendors in advance, in the event your primary vendor is unable to provide service during the disruption.

Review, Update and Test Your Plan

- ☐ Ensure your laboratory has a copy of your continuity and emergency plans on file.
- ☐ Review and update your plans annually.
- ☐ Train and conduct tabletop exercises or drills with your personnel to practice your established procedures.