

GUIDELINES FOR LABORATORY RELOCATION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The following checklist should be considered a guideline when planning for laboratory relocation. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list of requirements, since, depending on the type of testing done at a laboratory, there may be other factors to take into consideration. The guiding principle for accredited laboratories that are moving locations is to ensure that they do not jeopardize their accreditation status when relocating.

1.1 Relevant ISO 17025:2005 clauses

4.2.7 - Top management shall ensure that the integrity of the management system is maintained when changes to the management system are planned and implemented.

5.5.2 - Before being placed into service, equipment (including that used for sampling) shall be calibrated or checked to establish that it meets the laboratory's specification requirements and complies with the relevant standard specifications. It shall be checked and/or calibrated before use.

5.5.6 - The laboratory shall have procedures for safe handling, transport, storage, use and planned maintenance of measuring equipment to ensure proper functioning and in order to prevent contamination or deterioration.

5.5.9 - When, for whatever reason, equipment goes outside of the direct control of the laboratory, the laboratory shall ensure that the function and calibration status of the equipment are checked and shown to be satisfactory before the equipment is returned to service.

5.8.1 - The laboratory shall have procedures for the transportation, receipt, handling, protection, storage, retention and/or disposal of test and/or calibration items, including all provisions necessary to protect the integrity of the test or calibration item, and to protect the interests of the laboratory and the customer.

1.2 Checklist for Relocation

- Provide details of the relocation (i.e., date of move, the distance between locations, new address, etc.) to CALA.
- Define responsibilities (e.g., Who has overall responsibility for the move? Who has responsibility for keeping customers informed? Who has responsibility to ensure that the function and calibration status of the equipment are checked and shown to be satisfactory before the equipment is returned to service? Who has responsibility for re-validation of equipment and/or authorizing resumption of testing? For toxicology methods in particular, who has the responsibility of ensuring that fully acclimated test organisms are available at the new location before samples arrive?).
- Develop a plan on how sample receipt will be handled during the move. For example, will the laboratory still accept samples and subcontract, will the laboratory keep the old facilities in operation until the new facilities are operational, or is the laboratory planning not to receive samples? What will happen if samples with a short holding time are received 1-2 days prior to the move?
- Specify how items will be moved, including but not limited to:
 - Instruments;
 - Thermometers;
 - field kits;
 - biologicals;
 - chemicals;
 - test organism cultures;
 - in-process samples and completed samples; and,
 - records.
- If contracting a vendor or subcontractor to move large / sensitive equipment such as ICP's and high resolution GCMS', ensure that a thorough preparation is done at both locations and try not to underestimate the time to do the move.
- Consider if notification of any regulatory bodies is required. For example, import permits may need to be transferred to the new location or permits may be required to actually transport chemicals or organisms. Also, inspections by regulatory bodies are sometimes needed for compliance.
- Specify checks that will be done to determine the suitability of the laboratory water supply (quality and quantity).
- Specify checks that will be performed on ambient air in the new location, and when they will be performed.

- Detail any other aspects of the accommodation and environmental conditions that could affect test results that need to be checked prior to the move (e.g., fumehoods, quantity and quality of test organism culture water supply).
- Specify how the function and calibration status of equipment is going to be checked and shown to be satisfactory before the equipment is returned to service. Aspects to be considered include, but are not limited to:
 - Linearity;
 - Accuracy;
 - Low level checks (e.g., use a check standard at 5-10X method detection limit);
 - Volumetric checks;
 - Results of samples before and after the move; and,
 - Criteria or acceptance limits to determine if an instrument can be returned to service.
- Some areas of the laboratory may require special consideration (e.g., microbiology or toxicology). In microbiology testing, items to consider include, but are not limited to:
 - Stabilization and spatial variability of incubators;
 - Media checks, to ensure that the move did not impact any media that were already prepared and had passed any QC checks prior to the move;
- Considerations in toxicology include, but are not limited to:
 - Maintaining environmental conditions of test organisms.
 - Ensuring the electrical supply ground fault is protected in wet lab areas.
 - Health, proper acclimation, and response to reference toxicants of organism cultures in the new facility prior to the resumption of testing.
- Note if there are other procedures that will be impacted, that could ultimately affect the generation of data. For example, in microbiology and toxicity testing, one person often has to read plates on weekends or monitor tests, and there may be a safety and security procedure that could determine whether someone will be able to enter the new location to complete a test. Another important consideration is ensuring that any computers, and especially LIMS, are available and functioning properly.
- Note that moving locations often takes considerably longer than anticipated, and may have a high degree of potential failures. While difficult, try to plan comprehensively for every event. It may be a good idea to include a failure / risk analysis (what can go wrong, controls, action plans) in a plan.