

Walk-in Temperature Controlled Room Life Safety Procedures

4/16/2019

This procedure must be posted near the door entrance and maintain a copy in your CHP to document the training.

Principal Investigators/Supervisors and those responsible for access to walk-in temperature controlled rooms must ensure that all personnel understand the potential life-safety hazards associated with these spaces and understand the emergency egress procedures, as defined below.

Personnel entering room must inform the responsible person that they are entering the walk-in temperature controlled room, and follow life safety procedures as described below. Working alone without a buddy system or check-in schedule¹ is not permitted. In case of an emergency:

Emergency number and location info is posted within the interior door.

Before entering: familiarize yourself with the location of any safety devices present, such as a panic button, emergency release mechanism, firefighter's axe and lighting. If present, test the emergency release mechanism and other safety features with your buddy outside the walk-in cooler/freezer to ensure that everything is properly operating. If present, make sure employee(s) are trained on firefighters axe use. Promptly report any electrical and mechanical issues to:

Facilities Management (805) 893-8900.

The following precautions shall be used by personnel:

- use a buddy system **or** a check-in system¹
- for check-in system, bring charged cell phone (test signal inside!)
- if feasible, secure door in open position when inside cooler/freezer
- Wear appropriate clothing to protect from temperature extremes.

Unless suitable ventilation is provided, the risk of low oxygen or hazardous atmospheres is particularly real when;

- compressed gases or volatile chemicals are stored or used
- persons work within for any length of time
- storing or using dry ice, liquid nitrogen, or other cryogenic asphyxiant

Contact EHS: 893-8243 with any questions

¹See reverse side regarding Buddy system and Check-in schedule

What is the Buddy System and Check-in schedule to support worker safety?

Being trapped inside a walk-in cooler can quickly become a life-threatening situation. The hazards present are extreme temperatures and a potentially oxygen-deficient atmosphere. Individuals exposed to these hazards can quickly succumb to hypothermia and asphyxiation. Therefore, it is imperative that employees not work alone in these environments. To address this:

Individuals can employ a **buddy system** when entering the walk-in. The lab worker brings a coworker along to the walk-in unit to keep watch outside the unit until the task is finished.

The **check-in system** involves notifying a coworker that you will be entering the walk-in. In this case, the co-worker does not come along, but stops by on a pre-defined regular basis to confirm that the employee in the unit is OK. This approach is acceptable if the walk-in unit has a functioning alarm and/or there is adequate cell phone reception in the unit for the employee to call out.