ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

CORRIDOR SAFETY

Corridors in University buildings used for egress must remain free of hazardous materials, equipment, storage, and other materials and debris to ensure the safety of building occupants.

GENERAL INFORMATION

These statements reflect compliance requirements of all applicable health and safety codes and standards including but not limited to, fire safety, public health, biological safety and radiological safety:

- **Hazardous materials** and agents must not be stored or used in a corridor.
- **Food and drink** can be present in a corridor (e.g., break area for laboratory personnel) provided it meets egress requirements (e.g., does *not* block exit routes).
- **Building systems must be accessible** for service and maintenance personnel.
- Corridors are **not assigned** to UW departments and administrative units.
- The use of corridors must not put the University at risk of regulatory action.
- Corridors **do not have adequate ventilation** to control the heat load generated by equipment.
- Corridors are **not designed to provide secondary containment** for chemical spills or to control fugitive emissions and odors.
- In the event of an emergency (fire, hazardous materials release, etc.), the **fire department requires space to stage and operate in corridors** and near stair enclosures.

PROHIBITIONS

The following are serious safety issues and require immediate action by the responsible unit/department:

1. **Any items located within a stairway** or stair enclosure
2. Any items that **restrict the width of any portion of a corridor** to less than 44 inches
3. Any items that **obstruct emergency equipment** (fire alarm pull stations, sprinklers, fire extinguishers, emergency washing facilities, emergency shut off valves, etc.)
4. **Storage or use of hazardous materials** (chemicals, biological, and radioactive) in a corridor
   Exception: Non-cryogen freezer/refrigerator or ambient storage of biological agents and PCR kits with enzymes and primer sets in very small quantities, if the freezer/refrigerator is labeled and locked and biological agents are stored in leak proof containers and it is not violating any prohibition listed above.

Prohibited items and processes

The following items and processes are **not** acceptable and **must be removed** within 30 days after notification:

1. Any item which **obstructs electrical panels, access hatches or valves**
2. Laboratory processing and similar equipment
   Exceptions:
   - Centrifuges with sealed rotors for BSL-1 and non-infectious materials
   - Refrigerators and freezers, per item #4 above
   - Other lab equipment in limited access corridors when the location and use does not jeopardize emergency egress. Case by case approval for biological safety and fire prevention is required.
3. Hazardous and biological (infectious) waste
4. Storage or use of compressed gas cylinders and cryogenic Dewars
5. Mechanical equipment with exposed/unguarded belts pulleys and gears
6. Any item that produces steam, odors, aerosols
7. Unsecured or poorly secured items which could fall over and cause an injury or obstruction

Prohibited items and processes - *continued*

8. Workstations (typical desk and chair/computer/loose and combustible materials)
9. Overstuffed sofa, futons and similar highly combustible furniture
10. Recycle and waste containers except those approved for public areas
11. Equipment and property to be picked up by Surplus (temporary storage)
12. Temporary storage associated with construction (unless specifically planned, designated and authorized)

ALLOWED ITEMS

Examples of items that can be stored in corridors:

1. Seismically secured refrigerators, freezers for non- hazardous storage and food; units for lab related storage must be kept locked. Units must be labeled with name and contact information
2. Seismically secured non-combustible or low combustible filing cabinets and storage cabinets with latching doors (no hazardous materials storage)
3. Low combustible chairs and table for breaks if a break room not available on the floor
4. Low combustible chairs and table for waiting areas, within reason, given space available
5. White boards, bulletin board, art, signs, display cases, and similar wall hung items that are low or noncombustible and occupy a reasonably small percentage of the wall
6. Food, drink, cash and similar vending machines that are secure from tipping
7. Recycle intended for public areas (no “bag-it” or 90 gallon plastic containers)

Conditions for allowed items:

1. All items must be located along one side of the corridor and located so that it does *not* block access to panels, emergency equipment or obstruct signage.
2. Allowed use must not obstruct access or visibility of safety equipment, lighting, exit and other signs.
3. Large equipment may not be placed on tables or stacked on top of other equipment.
4. Extension cords are *not* allowed.
5. Large heavy objects must be adequately secured. Table, chairs and other furnishings must be of low combustibility.
6. Equipment may *not* reduce required corridor width, typically 44 inches but greater in some cases (consult with EH&S).
7. Maintain clearances as follows:
8. Emergency Showers: 24 inches from non-electrical and 60 inches from electrical equipment
9. Doors: 18 inches from pull side and 12 inches on the push side from the door latch for accessibility (see ANSI A117.1)
10. Fire extinguishers: 18 inches left and right and nothing below
11. Ceiling: No closer than 18 inches for fire protection
12. Doors from occupied rooms must meet building code swing clearance requirements (At least 37 inches clear in corridor when door fully open). (confer with EH&S)
13. Refrigerator/freezer and cabinets door swing need not be considered if normally closed and provided with a latch or lock
14. Electrical/Access panels/fountains: Six (6) inches from edge and 3 feet minimum total with for the access panel; nothing allowed above or below

DEFINITIONS

Corridor: Public and private circulation paths, elevator lobbies, and similar spaces that are typically 44 inches to 12 feet wide which serve as a required means of egress

Egress: A path used for exiting a building

Hazardous Materials: All chemical, radiological, biological materials and waste

Lab processing equipment: Centrifuge, incubator, ovens, sterilizer, autoclave, pressure vessel, mixers, shakers, stirrers, hoods, bio-safety cabinets, scintillation, scopes, scales, electronics, lasers, and similar equipment

Limited Access Corridor: A corridor that is separated from other space with normally closed cross-corridor doors and not frequented by the public

PCR Kits: Polymerase chain reaction kits; extraction enzymes, primer sets, and similar in very small quantities

Contact EH&S at 206.543.7262 or ehsdept@uw.edu for more information.