

How can NIH Staff Help the Environmental Decommissioning Program?

The NIH Environmental Decommissioning Program identifies, locates and treats environmental hazards within buildings targeted for renovation or closure. This process is required by many local, state and federal statutes, along with NIH and HHS policies. It is crucial that the NIH perform a thorough and efficient decommissioning to ensure a healthy working place for NIH staff and to maintain a healthy environment. Fortunately, there are many ways that NIH staff can assist with this task.

Here are a few ways NIH staff can help support the decommissioning process:

Best Management Practices:

- If you are managing an upcoming renovation or alteration to a space, be sure to [contact](#) the Division of Environmental Protection for an evaluation on whether decommissioning is necessary.
- Keep a detailed inventory of chemicals used in your lab, avoid spills and [maintain records of any spills or accidental releases](#). This will greatly assist the decommissioning process by making it much easier to identify potential contaminants.

Waste Management:

- Always dispose of waste (chemical, medical pathological, radioactive, etc.) properly, according to the [NIH Waste Disposal Guide](#).
 - For any questions or clarifications, feel free to contact the DEP Waste and Resource Recovery Branch at 301-496-7990.
- Do not dispose of any chemicals in the sanitary sewer, unless [authorized](#) by the Division of Environmental Protection.

Toxic Substance Reduction:

- Minimize or eliminate the use of chemicals listed [as toxic by the EPA](#).
 - This is especially relevant to mercury, which the NIH has actively eliminated whenever possible, as described by the [NIH Policy Manual Chapter 3033](#).
- Explore the use of less-toxic chemical alternatives, whenever possible such as [EPA Safer Choice](#), GSA [Green Procurement](#), [USDA bio-preferred product](#), and [Green Seal](#).

For additional information, please contact the [Division of Environmental Protection](#) or the Remediation Team directly by sending an email to DEPDecom@mail.nih.gov.