

The ANSI Z9.11 Laboratory Decommissioning Standard: Recent Revisions and Practical Applications

The Z9.11 subcommittee was chartered to develop guidelines on decommissioning a research laboratory whenever laboratory spaces are to be renovated or demolished, with a special emphasis on the risk assessment process. This is often difficult due to the wide variety of materials, chemicals, equipment and processes that are conducted in laboratories.

Decommissioning is a process to ensure a facility and its associated infrastructure meet environmental health and safety requirements for its next use, which could be similar to its previous use as a laboratory or vastly different, such as a school or day care center.

This standard provides a risk-based approach to laboratory decommissioning. It assumes that laboratories are inherently safe environments where hazardous materials are used with safeguards that protect human health and the environment, and that decommissioning methods should be selected based on both the risk assessment and intended future use of the facility.

The focus of this session is to provide the Industrial Hygienist and other EHS professionals an overview of the standard, the “process” for determining what actions are required to properly decommission a laboratory given its current and future use, and some practical considerations for applying the elements of the standard in the field.