

# Wipe Surveys

## HOW TO PERFORM A REMOVABLE CONTAMINATION OR WIPE SURVEY



### WHAT IS A WIPE SURVEY

The typical wipe survey method uses dry filter papers or swabs, wiped over potentially contaminated surfaces, then analyzed with a liquid scintillation counter (LSC).

### WHEN & WHERE TO WIPE

You must conduct frequent surveys when you work with radioactive material. Perform an **After Use Survey** in your work area when you complete your work. Perform a **Monthly Survey** of the entire lab and record it in the lab survey notebook at the end of each month.

Surveys are required in all areas where radioactive materials are used or stored: floors and storage areas; equipment; work surfaces. Sketch a map of your lab and indicate where each wipe will be taken.

### HOW TO SURVEY

#### Taking Wipes



Filter Papers for Wipes

With gloved hands, wipe a filter paper (about 4.25cm) or cotton tipped swab over a surface using moderate pressure so that at least 100cm<sup>2</sup> of surface is covered on each wipe.

This can be done by drawing an “S” over a 2’x2’ square.

## Counting Wipes

Prepare samples for counting as suggested in the LSC's operating manual or a standard operating procedure.

Load each wipe into an LSC vial adding enough LSC fluid to cover the wipe.

Place the vial into the LSC rack, and analyze the wipes with a counting protocol programmed to detect the isotope(s) used in the lab.

A background wipe should also be prepared and counted with the samples wipes. Count samples for at least one minute.



## Contamination

Samples greater than 100 cpm over background are considered contaminated. You may either:

- **Label** the item or area with "caution radioactive materials" tape including the isotope, date and count rate (cpm).
- **Clean** the item to background cpm.
- **Dispose** of the item as radioactive waste; or
- **Store** the item decay. It should be bagged and labeled with the date, isotope, and cpm.

## DOCUMENTATION

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Monthly surveys must be recorded in the yellow lab survey notebook. Indicate on the log sheet: the building and room surveyed, your name and date, locations surveyed and results.

**For questions about surveys, contact EH&S at 206.543.7262.**