

## Policy on Building use during Ventilation Outage: School of Science

### Roger Bacon Hall and Morrell Science Center

Siena College is committed to providing a safe and healthy campus. Air quality is critically important to health. Air quality can be compromised when building engineering systems are not functioning as designed. This is especially true when hazardous materials (chemical and/or biological) are present. For this reason, the School of Science has a special policy for times when building ventilation is not functioning as designed. A common cause of inadequate building ventilation is a power outage.

Laboratory ventilation is designed to keep airborne concentrations of hazardous materials at low levels, so that individuals will not experience health effects from exposure to the materials. This is achieved by continuously changing the laboratory air at a rate of at least 6 air changes per hour. If air changes are insufficient, then airborne concentrations of hazardous materials can increase and occupants may experience deleterious health effects. Individuals working in laboratories are trained to recognize negative health effects of exposure. Properly operating ventilation keeps public areas, where occupants are not trained, free of airborne laboratory materials. By maintaining positive pressure in public areas relative to laboratories spaces, air flows from common areas to laboratories and to the outside of the building. Laboratory air should not be re-circulated. If laboratory ventilation is not functioning as designed, then the laboratory air may enter other areas of the building. For this reason, this special operating policy includes not only laboratories, but also the entire building, including non-laboratory space. When Roger Bacon Hall has no power, it has no ventilation. Morrell Science Center has a generator that may provide some ventilation during a power outage, but the ventilation may not be adequate to provide for a safe working environment.

When a laboratory in Roger Bacon Hall or Morrell Science Center has no ventilation or reduced ventilation, then the individual in charge of the laboratory operations, the principal investigator or laboratory instructor, is to immediately suspend laboratory activity. The individual in charge of the laboratory evaluates conditions and takes steps, provided it is safe, to stabilize all reactions, to cap all containers of laboratory materials and then makes a decision whether or not it is safe to remain in the laboratory. The laboratory will be determined to be safe only if all sources of hazardous materials are contained in closed systems. If the laboratory is determined to be safe, then instruction may continue for one hour. No hazardous materials may be opened during the hour. If within one hour power is not restored, **the Dean's office with assistance from Office of Public Safety will make an announcement via the PA system that the building is to be evacuated** and classes will be canceled until power is restored.

If it is not possible to cap or otherwise contain all sources of hazardous materials, or if other conditions exist that make it unsafe to continue instruction, then the individual in charge, and any students present, are to immediately evacuate the laboratory. If an alternative non-laboratory space is available and if there is enough light to walk through hallways and stairwells safely to continue instruction, then instruction may continue in the alternative space. The individual in charge of the laboratory should notify Office of Public Safety at 518-783-2999 of the potential hazard present in the laboratory space and if conditions could impact additional building areas.

Faculty and staff may take more immediate and stringent actions to provide for the safety of all building occupants. Under some conditions, it may be appropriate to immediately evacuate the laboratory and notifying the Office of Public Safety at 518-783-2999.

After power and ventilation are restored, the Siena College Facilities Department will evaluate and provide permission to enter the building.

*For purposes of this policy, hazardous chemical is any chemical with an NFPA or HMIS rating of 2 or higher or any chemical that has not been rated by NFPA or HMIS.*

This policy is effective beginning **April 27, 2011.**