

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 100cm² 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

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.