MONASH University

HEALTH SAFETY & WELLBEING ALERT

Hazard Alert: Risks associated with using small laboratory electrical equipment inside cold rooms

OVERVIEW

- Safe use of electrical equipment and power sources in cold rooms reduces the risk of fires and electrical incidents.
- Cold rooms are hostile environments with increased level of humidity resulting in moisture build-up. Electrical equipment used in cold rooms must be suitable for such conditions and should be regularly checked and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.
- Lab equipment showing signs of corrosion and damage can pose a significant risk to personal safety and research integrity. Insufficient number of power points and overuse of power boards can further exacerbate these risks. It is important to identify and manage these electrical hazards promptly to ensure a safe working environment.

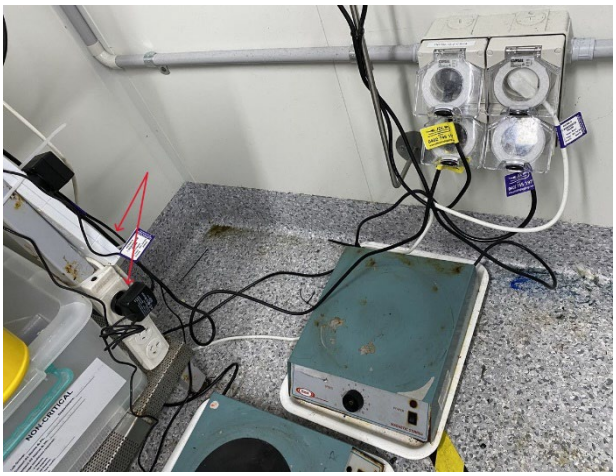
HAZARDS

- Corrosion in electrical equipment used in cold rooms, can lead to short circuits, electrical shocks, equipment damage or fires.
- The use of power boards or extension leads in the cold rooms due to insufficient power points, can result in unsafe conditions leading to electrical overload, increased risk of electric shock, equipment damage and fires.

ACTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MANAGING THE RISK

Lab Managers and Operational Managers:

- Electrical equipment should be inspected as part of routine workplace inspections.
- Equipment used in hostile environments such as cold rooms, may need to be inspected more frequently.
- Any damaged equipment or equipment showing signs of degradation or corrosion (including damaged power cord or the electrical plug) must be tagged out and removed from use. Equipment must not be put back in use unless checked and signed off as safe by a suitably qualified expert (e.g. a licensed electrician).



- Ongoing use of power boards in the lab should be avoided.
- Additional power points should be installed if equipment is permanently used.
- Standard power boards must not be used inside cold rooms due to potential moisture ingress from condensation or water leaks.
- Limit the time electrical equipment is kept in the cold room, i.e. remove the equipment from the cold room when not in use.
- Ensure all electrical equipment is tested and tagged and within date. Refer to the Electrical Safety procedure.

All users:

- Visually check the power cord for any obvious damage before plugin in and unplugging the equipment.
- Report any hazards and safety issues related to electrical equipment to your lab manager and/or Safety Officer or contact the relevant HSW Consultant or Advisor directly or contact the BPD helpdesk 9902 0222.
- Hazards and Incidents should be reported in SARAH+ as soon as possible.
- In an Emergency contact 000 and immediately call Monash Security on 333.

More Information: Please contact the Monash Health Safety & Wellbeing team hsw@monash.edu