Laboratory Relocation Checklist and Timeline

SECURE TRANSPORTATION SINCE 1996



A stage-by-stage checklist for moving a laboratory: kit survey, decontamination, cold chain, transit, placement and handover to your quality team

1. Purpose:

Moving a laboratory is not an office move with heavier boxes. Fume cupboards, ultra-low freezers, incubators and biological safety cabinets all carry their own conditions, and a missed step can cost samples, downtime or a failed handover.

This checklist and timeline helps laboratory managers, estates teams, procurement leads and project managers plan the logistics of a lab move in the right order.

It is useful when you are:

- moving a laboratory to a new floor, building or site
- consolidating two labs into one
- relocating specialist equipment between sites
- moving into a newly fitted laboratory
- preparing a brief for a specialist relocation supplier

It covers the logistics: survey, packing, transit and placement. It does not replace your own safety, quality or regulatory processes.

2. How the Timeline Works:

A laboratory move runs in six stages. Work through them in order and set a target date against each one. Timings are a guide: a small lab can move faster, while a regulated or multi-room lab needs longer, especially for decontamination and requalification.

Stage	What happens	Target date	Owner
1. Scope and survey	Equipment list, access and conditions agreed		
2. Planning and approvals	Method, RAMS, building approvals, supplier briefed		
3. Preparation	Decontamination, emptying, labelling, power-down		
4. Move day	Packing, controlled transit, unloading		
5. Placement and reconnection	Equipment placed in the new lab and made ready for use		
6. Handover	Records, certificates and sign-off passed to your team		

3. Stage 1: Scope and Survey:

Agree what is moving, and what condition it needs to be in on the way.

- [ ] Move owner and lab lead named
- [ ] Full equipment list created, with asset ID and serial number for each item
- [ ] Items to move, items to dispose of and items to leave behind separated
- [ ] Fume cupboards, ultra-low temperature freezers, incubators, biological safety cabinets and other specialist kit identified
- [ ] Items that must stay cold, powered or upright during transit identified
- [ ] Weight and size checked for the heaviest and tallest items
- [ ] Origin and destination access surveyed: doors, corridors, lifts, loading bay and floor loading
- [ ] Out-of-hours or restricted access windows confirmed
- [ ] Specialist suppliers or manufacturers who must disconnect or recommission items identified

4. Stage 2: Planning and Approvals:

Get the paperwork and permissions in place before anything is touched.

- [ ] Method statement and risk assessment (RAMS) agreed with the relocation supplier
- [ ] Building management approvals requested at both sites
- [ ] Contractor vetting, insurance and training records requested and supplied
- [ ] Lab safety officer briefed on the plan
- [ ] Hazardous materials, chemicals, gases and biological materials listed, with a plan for each
- [ ] Sample and reagent transfer plan agreed (who moves them and how)
- [ ] Back-up storage arranged for temperature-sensitive contents
- [ ] Move sequence agreed: which equipment moves first and which last
- [ ] Staff briefed on what to do and what not to touch

5. Stage 3: Preparation:

Make each item safe to move.

- [ ] Equipment decontaminated and decontamination certificates issued where required
- [ ] Certificates attached to the matching asset ID
- [ ] Chemicals, gases, biological materials and consumables removed or packed separately
- [ ] Freezers, fridges and incubators emptied or contents moved to agreed cold storage
- [ ] Equipment powered down and defrosted where required
- [ ] Doors, shelves and loose parts secured
- [ ] Every item, case and crate labelled with asset ID, destination room and handling notes
- [ ] Condition photos taken of high-value items before handling
- [ ] Destination lab ready: services, power, ventilation and floor protection checked

6. Stage 4: Move Day:

Keep control of the equipment, the route and the record.

- [ ] Site sign-in and induction completed at origin
- [ ] Route inspected and protected: floors, corners, doorframes, lift
- [ ] Equipment checked against the equipment list before loading
- [ ] Specialist kit packed and secured as agreed
- [ ] Temperature-controlled transit used where required, and temperature plan confirmed
- [ ] Vehicle loaded in the agreed order, with items secured
- [ ] Chain of custody recorded from collection to delivery
- [ ] Equipment checked off against the list on arrival
- [ ] Damage or discrepancy recorded immediately, with photographs

7. Stage 5: Placement and Reconnection:

Put each item where it belongs and make it ready for your own team.

- [ ] Each item placed in the agreed room and position
- [ ] Equipment kept upright, stable and clear of walkways
- [ ] Packaging removed and the area left clean
- [ ] Reconnection, recommissioning or relocation of fume cupboards and cabinets carried out by the correct specialist, where this is outside the logistics scope
- [ ] Freezers and incubators powered up and brought to temperature as the manufacturer directs
- [ ] Cold-stored contents returned only when each unit is confirmed ready

- [ ] Gas, water, power and ventilation connections checked by a competent person

8. Stage 6: Handover:

Close the job with a record your quality team can use.

- [ ] Final equipment list checked and signed
- [ ] Decontamination certificates and photographs filed with the asset records
- [ ] Incidents, damage and missing items logged and closed out
- [ ] Validation, calibration or requalification handed to your quality team or the manufacturer, where required
- [ ] Waste, packaging and disposed items accounted for
- [ ] Sign-off captured from the lab lead
- [ ] Lessons noted for the next move

9. Common Laboratory Move Mistakes:

- starting without a complete equipment list
- not agreeing who moves samples, reagents and cold-stored items
- moving a freezer before the destination is ready to power it
- forgetting decontamination certificates until the crew arrives
- not checking the lift, door and floor-loading limits
- treating specialist kit as ordinary furniture
- leaving validation and requalification until after the move date
- no photographs of existing condition
- changing the move sequence on the day without telling the crew

10. Where Secure Transportation Fits:

Secure Transportation handles the logistics of laboratory and scientific equipment moves: packing, secure transport, careful handling and placement in the new laboratory, with a documented chain of custody.

The work follows your site's rules, with RAMS prepared and crews briefed before arrival.

Calibration, technical commissioning, clinical or scientific validation and decontamination remain with your own team or the equipment manufacturer unless agreed in writing.

11. Related Secure Transportation services:

- Medical & Scientific Equipment Transport
- White Glove Clinical Delivery
- RAMS & Method Statements
- Warehousing & Pre-Staging