

## Vassar College Biology Department Laboratory Safety Rules

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### ***GENERAL RULES:***

1. Learn what safety equipment is available, where it is, and how to use it. EYEWASHES and SHOWERS are located in the halls on all floors. FIRE EXTINGUISHERS are located at the top of the stairs on each floor and in each laboratory. There is one in the introductory lab by the door nearest the lobby. First aid and spill-containment materials are available in each lab.
2. Avoid working alone in a laboratory. If you absolutely must work alone, have someone look in on you.
3. Unauthorized experiments are prohibited. Get permission from your instructor before performing any experiment, which is not assigned as regular course work.
4. Don't remove any chemicals or equipment from the lab without permission.
5. Horseplay cannot be tolerated.
6. Store coats, hats, umbrellas, back packs, etc., outside the laboratory on the rack, which is provided, or store them in the drawers near your workspace. DO NOT put them on the floor by your workspace.

### ***PERSONAL SAFETY:***

1. DO NOT SMOKE, EAT, DRINK, chew gum or use cosmetics in the laboratory. Do not touch your face, lick labels, or put pencils and other materials in your mouth.
2. Goggles must be worn in the laboratory and where chemicals are being stored and handled. Do not wear contact lenses where volatile chemicals are being used.
3. Never enter a laboratory with open-toed shoes, sandals, or bare feet. Broken glass, bacterial contamination and chemical spills are serious hazards.
4. Long hair must be tied back.
5. If anything is spilled on your skin or clothing, dilute the material by washing with lots of water, then ask the instructor for advice and assistance.
6. Keep your workspace uncluttered.

7. Be aware of what your neighbors are doing – you may become a victim of their mistakes.
8. In the event of a fire alarm, turn off all Bunsen burners and electrical equipment and leave the building immediately by the nearest exit. Do not run.
9. Always wash your hands before leaving the laboratory.

***SAFE HANDLING OF CHEMICALS AND EQUIPMENT:***

1. Do not use mouth suction to fill a pipet. Use one of the pipetting aids available.
2. Broken glassware should be deposited in the appropriately marked box, not in the wastebasket.
3. Place used razor blades in the disposal container at the sink areas, not on the trays or table tops, and not in the wastebasket.
4. Always read labels on bottles of chemicals. Label carefully anything you prepare. Never use or accept unlabeled containers.
5. Never taste or smell a chemical unless specifically told to do so.
6. Do not attempt to catch falling glassware.
7. Never leave a flame unattended. **BE CAREFUL THERE IS NO FLAMMABLE LIQUID (e.g., ether) NEARBY BEFORE LIGHTING A BUNSEN BURNER OR ALCOHOL LAMP.** Be sure to turn off gas jets as soon as you are through using them.
8. Never look directly at a UV light. UV radiation is extremely dangerous to the eyes.

***HANDLING MICROORGANISMS SAFELY:***

1. All blood and blood products are to be treated as infectious agents. Ask your instructor for specific directions for their safe handling and disposal.
2. **ALWAYS** swab the working surface with an effective disinfectant such as **ROCCAL** before starting to work and at the end of the laboratory period.
3. Keep paper, paper, fingers, etc., out of the mouth. **NEVER EAT IN THE LABORATORY.**
4. Learn and use good sterile technique. Flame or incinerate inoculating needles or loops immediately before and after use. The lips of all flasks, bottles, culture tubes, etc., are to be flamed after removing and before replacing the cotton plug, stopper, or metal cap.

5. NEVER lay a cotton plug or cap down on the table. Be careful to reinsert a cotton plug firmly.
6. Keep culture tubes, flasks, etc., upright at all times to prevent spills. Racks for tubes are provided.
7. All containers of microorganisms and all sterile equipment must be covered except when in use. Never leave Petri dishes sitting about on the table top uncovered.
8. If a living culture is spilled, cover with disinfectant and report it to the instructor.
9. Report all personal accidents immediately, especially cuts.
10. Do not discard anything containing microorganisms down the sink or in trash cans. Place materials in the labeled containers provided. Avoid spillage in the discarding process.
11. At the end of the laboratory period, put away all materials and swab the desk or working area with disinfectant.
12. Wash hands thoroughly before leaving the laboratory.