Laboratory Safety Rules  
Chemistry and Biochemistry Department  
Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo  

The rules listed here are minimum rules that apply to all laboratory work in the Chemistry & Biochemistry Department. Your instructor may add others. Failure to comply with these rules may result in reduction in grade or, in extreme cases, expulsion from the lab.

**Do These Things**

1. You must always wear appropriate eye protection whenever anyone is working with hazardous chemicals or processes in the lab. (See the Protective Equipment Guide for information on correct goggle types)

2. Confine loose hair and clothing. Wear closed shoes (e.g. sandals and clogs are not appropriate footwear). A lab coat or lab apron must be worn at all times while you are working with hazardous chemicals in the laboratory. Wear gloves that are resistant to permeation by chemicals that can cause serious or irreversible damage upon skin contact. (See the Protective Equipment Guide for information on lab coat, apron and glove types and availability)

3. Report a significant physical or medical condition -- for example, pregnancy or chemical allergy -- to your instructor.

4. If you injure yourself -- for example, if you cut, burn, or spill a harmful chemical on yourself -- tell your instructor at once.

5. Make sure you understand and follow all directions for each experiment, including the safety directions.

6. Be very careful with flames. Do not use a Bunsen burner unless your instructor has specifically told you to do so.

7. Learn the locations of safety equipment -- safety showers, eye wash fountains, fire blankets and substances for neutralizing acid spills. Locations of showers and eye wash fountains are especially important because you may need one suddenly. Use of fire extinguishers is limited to faculty; in case of fire, leave the room.

8. Keep your equipment locker and work area neat. Clutter creates accidents.

9. Dispose of waste chemicals according to directions stated in your lab manual or given by your instructor. Do not return unused chemicals to their original containers.

10. Clean up spilled chemicals or broken glass immediately. Dispose of broken glass in designated glass disposal boxes. If you break a thermometer, tell your instructor immediately so the mercury can be cleaned up.

11. Wash your hands before leaving the lab.

**Do Not Do These Things**

1. Do not enter a laboratory unless authorized by the instructor.
2. Do not work alone in any lab. Do not perform unauthorized experiments. These rules also apply to project students.
3. Do not eat or drink in the lab. Do not place food or drink containers on bench tops.
4. Do not kneel or stand on lab stools or sit on bench tops.

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