

School of Biochemistry and Cell Biology
Safety Regulations for Biochemistry & Cell Biology Laboratory Workers

Introduction

In accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, it is the policy of University College Cork and the School of Biochemistry and Cell Biology to ensure, so far as is reasonably practical, the health and safety of all employees while present in University College Cork. Guidance on general laboratory matters relating to health and safety are contained in this document. It is the duty of all employees to take account of such guidance and ensure that your actions do not injure yourself or others.

Safety Regulations

- Protective laboratory coats must be worn at all times.
- Safety glasses must be worn when carrying out experimental procedures. If you wear prescription glasses you do not need to wear safety glasses.
- Contact lenses should not be worn in the laboratory.
- Long hair must be tied back.
- Sandals or open type shoes must not be worn in the laboratory.
- Gloves must be worn when using hazardous reagents.
- Mobile phones should not be used in the laboratory.
- Smoking, eating and drinking is prohibited in the laboratory.
- Mouth pipetting is forbidden. Ensure that you know how to use them properly before attempting to pipette.
- When using pipettes in the laboratory, it is not acceptable to use force to insert the pipette into a pipette holder.
- Consider all chemicals to be hazardous unless you are instructed otherwise. Safety Data Sheets are available in laboratory for all chemicals in use.

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- Fire exits and passageways must be kept clear at all times. Please familiarise yourself with the location of the fire exit(s), first aid boxes and the fire extinguisher(s). First Aid Boxes are located in convenient locations throughout the laboratory.
- Place bags and coats in appropriate area.
- Note the position of the eyewash station and the emergency shower.
- If any substance gets in your eyes, you should immediately wash with water for several minutes using the eye wash station.
- If you have an open cut, ensure covered with a waterproof dressing.
- All cuts abrasions, injuries/accidents or dangerous occurrences in the laboratory must be reported to your Principal Investigator or the laboratory supervisor. Any suspected infection should be stated.
- Individuals who suffer from medical conditions should inform your Principal Investigator in confidence.
- Wash your hands at the beginning and end of your laboratory work.
- Do not walk through the laboratory with loops or pipettes containing microbes.
- Do not allow your working space to become untidy. Glassware which you have finished with should be placed in the appropriate area.
- Equipment and working surfaces should be kept clean and tidy.
- Keep reagent bottles clean and clearly labelled. Bottles and containers should be fitted with stoppers or lids at all times.
- Be careful when handling glassware. Inspect all glassware for faults before use. Take broken or chipped glassware out of use immediately and discard in appropriate bin for glass disposal. Do not use this bin for any other items except for broken glassware. Do not pick up broken glassware with your hand.
- When plating out bacteria, it is unacceptable to keep a beaker with ethanol near the Bunsen flame.
- If you smell gas in the laboratory, you should report it immediately.
- Oven gloves should be used to remove hot items from the microwave.

- Cover the alcohol bottle when it is not in use, so that alcohol vapor will not build up in the atmosphere.

Procedure in the event of a Fire or Fire alarm

- When the alarm sounds, switch off gas taps and electrical apparatus, if safe to do so.
- Leave the building immediately by the nearest exit. Do not wait to collect any personal belongings.
- Walk swiftly. Do not run. Exit quietly in an orderly fashion.
- Use the stairs to exit, **do not use the lifts.**
- Follow the Fire Marshals instructions and directions and assemble outside the fire.
- Do not shout or behave in any way likely to cause panic.
- The fire brigade will be called automatically when the fire alarm is triggered.
- If there is no emergency, the fire brigade or the safety officer, on completion of a thorough check, will give the all clear to return.
- If the alarm was sounded because of a non-fire emergency, the person sounding the alarm should notify the fire marshals as to the nature of the emergency.
- Do not re-enter the building until the all clear is given and you are instructed to do so.
- If you notice someone missing, please notify the fire marshal or someone in authority.

In the event of a fire on a laboratory bench be prepared to complete any or all of the following actions:

- **Immediately notify your Principal Investigator or a technical staff member, so that the main supply of gas can be switched off.**
- Remove any items close to the fire example, books, pens, if it is safe to do so.
- Remove oxygen from the fire if possible. Assess the fire and determine if a fire extinguisher is sufficient to quench the fire. If it is too big ensure that the alarm is raised and leave.
- If you feel that the fire can be quenched use an extinguisher. **Do not put water on an electrical fire or on a fire of flammable liquid.** Always be sure that you have an exit between you and the fire.

Centrifuges

- Keep the centrifuge lid closed while operating and do not leave until you are certain it is running safely without vibration.
- Balance loads correctly before use.
- Do not force tubes into the centrifuge.
- If the centrifuge starts vibrating, stop it and recheck the load balances.
- Clean centrifuge after use.
- Do not place bottles and glassware too close; vibration may cause them to fall off bench.

- ✓ **You must always be aware that chemicals used in the laboratory are potentially toxic, irritating or flammable. Proper handling and disposal of all chemicals, sharp objects (example, broken glass) and infectious agents (example, blood) is essential, not only to maintain safe laboratory working conditions but also to protect the general public and local environment.**
- ✓ **If you see someone carrying out a potentially dangerous practice inform him or her of the danger. Inform your Principal Investigator if necessary.**
- ✓ **Each time an incident is reported, we can assess methods for preventing a similar incident. If they are not reported they cannot be investigated and/or prevented.**
- ✓ **Always wear your protective clothing and ensure that you carry out actions in as safe a manner as possible.**
- ✓ **In a situation where yourself or a colleague is seriously injured and needs urgent medical attention, the best thing to do is to inform a member of staff and go straight to the accident and emergency Department in the Mercy Hospital or Cork University Hospital.**

General Emergency Number: 999 or 112

UCC Security:

+353 (0) 21

Western Gateway Building (WGB): (420) 5800

Biosciences Institute Building (BSI): (490) 3111

Cavanagh Pharmacy Building (CPB): (490) 3111

Report Accidents

1. Contact your Principal Investigator or Supervisor
2. Forms to be completed, Staff Accident Report Form (Form 1) or Dangerous Occurrence/Incident Report Form (Form 2) – available from both administration offices located in Western Gateway Building Room 3.19 and Biosciences Institute Room 2.05.