



Common Work Practices in the Laboratory

Personal Safety Work Practices

The following is a list of common personal safety work practices:

- Do not recap needles or re-sheath scalpels.
- Do not eat, drink, or store food or drinks in the laboratory.
- Do not apply makeup or lip moisturizer, or handle contact lenses in the laboratory.
- Wear proper PPE such as safety glasses and a laboratory coat upon entering the laboratory.
- Wash your hands:
 - After removing your gloves
 - Before exiting the laboratory
- Wear appropriate clothing such as closed-toe shoes and long pants.
- Tie back loose hair.
- Be sure you are up to date with your vaccinations.
- Do not mouth pipette.

Facility Safety Work Practices

The following is a list of common facility safety work practices:

You should:

- Make sure emergency equipment, like fire extinguishers and exit routes, are not blocked.
- Know the location and protocols for fire extinguisher and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) use.
- Know the location and procedures to use eyewashes, safety showers, first aid kits, biological spill kits, chemical spill cabinets, and exits.
- Maintain proper airflow by keeping laboratory doors closed.
- Clean up spills, loose paper, and clutter on the floor to reduce slips and falls. Similarly, laboratory furniture must be easily cleanable. Laboratory chairs cannot be cloth covered.

General Safety Work Practices

The following is a list of general safety work practices:

- Discard anything that can puncture skin into sharps containers. Do not re-sheath or recap needles before putting them in the sharps container.
- Broken glass, like capillary tubes, that are biohazardous can be discarded with other sharps.
- Place non-biohazardous broken glass in a separate waste receptacle from the sharps container.
- Place chemicals in assigned storage areas.
- Label all containers.
- Escort visitors at all times.

This job aid is a component of the free, on-demand CDC training course “Fundamentals of Laboratory Safety.” Find the course at <https://reach.cdc.gov/training>

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