

Laboratory Rules

BIOL 2420: Microbiology for the Health Sciences

I. Preparing for Lab

1. Before each lab period, read over the scheduled exercises carefully.
2. **DO NOT** begin work until your instructor tells you it is time to begin.

II. Clothing and Accessories

1. Closed-toe and closed-heel shoes **must always** be worn in the lab.
2. Long hair should be bound back neatly, away from the shoulders.
3. Jewelry should be minimal and should not dangle. Avoid rings that can puncture gloves.
4. A lab apron should be worn at all times in the lab. It should be disinfected before and after wear.
5. Gloves should be worn, especially if you have a cut, etc. on your hands and when staining. Latex gloves are available; nitrile gloves are only for those with sensitivity to latex.
6. Goggles can provide extra protection; bring your own and use them if they make you feel safer.

III. General Health, Cleanliness, and Common Sense

1. Do not eat, drink, or chew anything in the lab. Do not bring food or drink into the lab. Never place any objects in your mouth while in lab, even if they belong to you.
2. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and hot water before and after every lab session at minimum and during lab as necessary.
3. Wipe down your lab tabletop with disinfectant before and after every lab session.
4. Do not place clothing, backpacks, or extraneous books on the lab tables.

You must learn and follow these rules any time you are in the lab.

Not following lab rules can result in the following consequences:

- Your instructor can deduct points from your lab session grade
- Your instructor can remove you from the lab and give you a zero for the day
- Your instructor can remove points from your overall lab grade
- Any open lab privileges can be revoked
- Your instructor can eject you from the lab permanently

IV. Working with Microorganisms

1. If you spill or drop any contaminated item, **STAY STILL** to avoid tracking the contaminant across the floor (if applicable) and **INFORM THE INSTRUCTOR IMMEDIATELY**. Flood the entire contaminated area with disinfectant and allow it to soak for 20 minutes before wiping it up. Caution nearby workers to avoid the area. Ask your instructor how to decontaminate your clothing, shoes, or personal items if anything spills on them.
2. Place all waste in the appropriate container:

Biohazard Bag: Petri dishes, directly contaminated paper towels, and directly contaminated gloves; no items which could puncture the bag.

Biohazard Box: Contaminated slides (except depression slides, when used), broken glass, coverslips; no depression slides or unbroken culture tubes.

Pipet Keeper: Pipets, swabs.

White Baskets: Culture tubes, placed with the cap facing outward (so that it will be at the top of the basket when the basket is upright).

Trash Can: Uncontaminated paper towels, gloves, pipet wrappers, swab wrappers, and other uncontaminated, non-glass items can go in the regular trash cans.

3. Never put down a loop or needle without flaming it first.
4. Learn the proper way to flame a loop so you avoid creating aerosols which can make you and others ill: http://www.austincc.edu/microbugz/movies/flaming_loop.php
5. Label each culture you incubate with the following information:
 - a. your name or initials
 - b. the genus and species of the organism or the number of your unknown
 - c. your instructor's name
 - d. the date

All cultures not properly labeled will be discarded by the instructor or lab assistants.
6. Use tape only on plates; **tape should never go on tubes.**
7. Put everything in its proper place at the end of class; you are responsible for your own clean-up.

**You will be working with potentially infectious organisms;
improper safety technique can lead to illness.**