Practice Reminders for Safe & Effective Use of a Biological Safety Cabinet (BSC)

The following graphics explain the importance of operational practices for those who use a BSC for working with biological materials. When such practices are consistently followed, the BSC can protect the worker, research materials and the lab environment from potentially harmful contamination.

**DOs when working with your Biological Safety Cabinet**

- Minimize airflow disturbances to airflow barrier.
- Avoid rapid movements. Move in a controlled and steady manner.
- Observe correct sash opening height. Always set the sash to correct opening height when working in your cabinet.
- Observe surface decontamination. Germicidal UV lamps are not substitute for good cleaning practice. Decontaminate work zone with cleaning agents after use.
- Observe proper working attire. Wearing complete personal protective equipment should be practiced.
- Be careful when using vaporizing toxic chemicals. This requires the cabinet to be exhaust ducted.
- Work ergonomically to reduce fatigue. Use BSCs with raised arm rest. Utilize ergonomic lab chairs and foot rests.
- Use a disinfectable notepad inside the BSC. Consider using smart tablets or iPads instead of paper notes.

**DON'Ts when working with your Biological Safety Cabinet**

- Do NOT confuse laminar flow with a biosafety cabinet.
- Check the label of the cabinet or look for the biohazard symbol.
- Do NOT operate if any of the alarms are activated.
- Visual and audible alarms are activated when sash is not at its correct working height and if airflow is out of normal range.
- Do NOT block the front intake grille. When the grille is blocked, a localized containment failure can happen that may affect the operator or contaminate the product.
- Do NOT place unnecessary items inside the cabinet. Always disinfect items put into the cabinet before taking it out.
- Do NOT plug high current equipment on the GFCI outlets inside the BSC. Always check the GFCI outlet max current rating. Do not plug vacuum cleaners as it may blow up the fuse.
- Do NOT place large or multiple magnets on the BSC body. Strong magnets must not be attached to the BSC because it can disrupt the sash window sensor.

**Are you acquiring, moving or servicing a BSC?**

Specific considerations apply to these activities to ensure that a BSC is installed, moved or maintained in a way that doesn’t create additional hazards during these activities. Review the guidance document at this link or contact VU Biosafety at VUBiosafety@vanderbilt.edu for assistance.

VU Biosafety – BSC practices 1.2023


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