



Laboratory Fume Hoods Recommended Work Practices

A fume hood that is properly designed and operated will provide adequate user protection under most laboratory working conditions. However, hood containment can be compromised if the user does not follow certain recommended work practices. The following work practices are recommended for all hood use, but are particularly important when working with volatile materials of high acute toxicity. Beware that heated processes may significantly compromise hood performance.

1. Conduct all operations that may generate irritating and/or hazardous air contaminants inside a hood. Make sure you know the hazards of any chemical you are working with and that you know how to operate the hood.
2. Make sure that the hood is operating by looking at the flow indicator or telltale if attached. If the hood is not operating or is in alarm, stop or close any chemical reactions and report this malfunction to Facilities immediately.
3. Keep all apparatus and chemicals at least 6 inches back from the face of the hood. A stripe on the bench surface inside the hood is a good reminder.
4. Minimize any obstruction of rear baffles by apparatus or containers.
5. Use equipment with legs, or raise it off the work surface with blocks or stands, when safe and practical, to allow even airflow under equipment.
6. Minimize sources of turbulence at the hood face including foot traffic, ventilation supply diffusers, fans, or abrupt moving of arms in and out of the hood. High performance hoods may be particularly susceptible to air turbulence at the hood face.
7. During use, position sash as low as possible, keeping below the height indicated on the yellow hood certification sticker. Keep the hood sash closed as much as possible.
8. Do not lean into the hood or put your head in the hood when contaminants are being generated.
9. Do not permanently store chemicals or apparatus in the hood. Store hazardous chemicals in an approved chemical storage cabinet. Some hoods have acid or flammable storage cabinets below. Do not leave open chemical waste containers in the hood.
10. Do not place sparking or other ignition sources inside the hood when flammable liquids or gases are present. No power strips are permitted in the hood – electrical cords can be routed into the hood through sidewall openings or under the front airfoil.
11. Do not remove hood sash or panels except when necessary for apparatus set-up. Replace sash or panels before operating the hood.