

Bi 1x: The Great Ideas of Biology – An Introduction Through Experimentation

Spring 2009

Lab Safety Handout

Overview

Relative to other types of labs, biology labs are generally very safe environments. However, there are some hazards—you will work with, among other things, bacterial cultures, carcinogens, high voltage electricity, and fluorescent light. Please abide by the common sense guidelines below to make the lab a safer place for yourself and for your classmates.

Safety Guidelines

1. Wash your hands before and (especially) after leaving the lab.
2. Attire:
 - a. Do not wear sandals or open toed shoes (to protect yourself in the event of a chemical spill).
 - b. Tie back long hair (to avoid exposing it to chemicals, cultures, or flames).
3. Do not eat or drink in the lab.
4. NEVER pipette by mouth.
5. Always wear gloves when working in the lab.
6. If you spill something, consult a TA about the best way to clean it up—simply wiping with a paper towel is generally not sufficient.
7. **On the Olympus microscopes, NEVER look in the eyepieces while the fluorescence is on. This light is unfiltered and could damage your eyes. Use the camera view only.**

Waste disposal

Safety extends to the environment as well, and we must be mindful of what we throw away or pour down the drain.

- Sharps (needles, razors) and glass waste must be thrown away in a red sharps container, regardless of what it came in contact with.
- Pipette tips, tubes, and other plasticware that have been exposed to living organisms (bacterial cultures, yeast cultures, etc) must be disposed of in biowaste containers.
- Cultures of any type cannot be poured down the drain without being sterilized (usually with bleach) first.
- Ethidium bromide waste is always disposed of separately.

When in doubt, ask a TA!