

# SAFE USE OF BIOLOGICAL SAFETY CABINETS

## Summary of Key Points

### Guidelines for Work Preparation

- Check with a safety officer to make sure you are using the right cabinet for your work.
- Make sure the cabinet has been certified within the past year.
- Make sure the UV light is off whenever anyone is in the room. (If the light is on, keep sliding windows closed or place a shield on fixed window openings.
- When you first turn the cabinet on, and if you do anything to disturb the air in the cabinet, let it run for two or three minutes to filter the air and establish air flow patterns.
- Disinfect the surface of the cabinet with the right disinfectant, one that will kill any microorganisms present.
- Check to be sure the window is in the correct position.
- Make sure the drain valve is closed.
- Have an accessible area for papers, pencils, etc., outside the cabinet so that contaminated objects are not placed inside the cabinet.
- Do not block any of the grilles in the cabinet.
- Segregate clean items from contaminated items.

### Guidelines for Working in the Cabinet

- Schedule uninterrupted work times and put a sign on the door that the cabinet is in use, as air turbulence disturbs the air flow.
- Only one person should work in the cabinet at a time.
- The operator should be seated, with arm pits level with the bottom of the window.
- Use good aseptic technique.
- Use slow movements in the cabinet; minimizing entering and exiting.
- When you do enter or exit a cabinet, do so straight on, allowing the cabinet to stabilize.
- Locate the product upstream, airflow-wise, from hands, equipment, and non-sterile items.
- Minimize movement of non-sterile items near sterile items.
- Do not use an open flame in the cabinet.
- Post a copy of your institution's protocol for handling spills.
- Never eat, drink, chew gum, store food, or smoke near the cabinet.

### Guidelines for Cleanup Operations

- All equipment which has been in contact with the research agent should be enclosed, and all surface disinfected.
- After removing everything from the cabinet, disinfect the inner surfaces.
- Do not store equipment or supplies in or on the cabinet.
- If possible, leave the cabinet running. If it must be shut off, do so after a final purge of two or three minutes, then close the window completely.