

All Incubators	Preventing Contamination in Lab Equipment	May 28, 2015

Recommendations for CO₂ Incubator and General Laboratory Practice to Prevent Contamination

(Rev. 02/2012 MKB)

CO₂ Incubator

1. Change the incubator water (not just refill but empty and put in fresh sterile distilled) at least every other week. Depending on how busy the incubator is (how often the door is opened), consider doing it every month.
2. Clean the incubator one to two times per month (depending on the number of users). It doesn't have to mean autoclave everything, but at least spray or wipe down with 70% ethanol, especially the water pan (do not spray ethanol on sensors). Allow to air dry.
3. Check the incubator once per week and discard older, unused cultures.
4. Check for air vents blowing onto the incubator. If there are any, and if possible, redirect the air. A/C ducts can be full of mold.
5. Make sure there is nothing stored on top of the incubator and that it is cleaned every two weeks or so to remove dust. Also wipe down the front doors and door handles with 70% ethanol.
6. Clean all spills immediately.

Biosafety Cabinet

1. Work a few inches inside of the front grill. Do not block the grill or back vent.
2. Use only what you need inside the cabinet; avoid clutter.
3. Work from clean to dirty; if you are right handed, keep clean items to your left, dirty to your right.
4. Keep a biohazard bag for discarding tips inside the cabinet, and a beaker filled with disinfectant for liquid waste, if needed. Empty these at least once per day.
5. Use slow arm movements in and out of the cabinet, back and forth, not side to side. Do not wave pipets. Hold open tubes at an angle, not straight up and down. Hold lids at an angle over plates.
6. Work with only one cell type at a time to avoid cross-contamination. Do not share media and

reagents among personnel or among cell types. Change gloves for different cell types.

7. Change pipet-aid filters regularly, and immediately after they get wet.

8. Clean all spills immediately.

General Lab

1. Clean the lab regularly, recommend once per month, including under, behind and on top of equipment. Dust and dirt make a great place for contamination to congregate.

2. Wipe benches and around the sink once per day with 70% ethanol.

3. Clean the water bath every 1-2 weeks, including the rim and lid.

4. Clean the sink, microscope, centrifuge, calculator, telephone, etc. every 2-4 weeks.

5. Put down sticky contamination control mats on the floor in front of the lab door to capture microbes and dirt coming in on shoes.

6. Make sure everybody wears gloves and lab coats whenever they handle the cells, including when entering the incubator.

7. Keep a lab coat for each person inside the lab. Do not wear it outside the lab. Put it on and button it as soon as you enter the lab. Launder regularly.

8. If you wear gloves when using centrifuge, microscope, phone, calculator, etc., change them before going back to work with the cells.

9. Tie long hair back when working in the lab.

10. Try to eliminate cardboard in the refrigerator and cold room; this can encourage mold growth.

11. Aliquot media and date. Check the refrigerator periodically and discard old open media.