

LABORATORY ETIQUETTE: *The good citizen rules*

The environment in a research laboratory has to be directed to entice and promote critical thinking, productivity, interpersonal exchange, safety and ethical behavior. In order to maintain a healthy lab environment the following conduct needs to be observed:

25 rules for a healthy laboratory environment

Safety

- 1) Use the proper attire to be in a laboratory (closed shoes, long pants, shirt with sleeves, minimal amount of jewelry, short or bound hair)
- 2) Label the bottles used with all the components/reagents and their corresponding concentration. Add the date when the buffer or solvent was prepared.
- 3) Don't leave **ON or unattended**: hot plates, burners, stirrer, or water baths
- 4) Know where the safety equipment is in the lab: fire blanket, fire extinguisher, chemical spill kit, first aid kit, emergency exit.
- 5) Know where the chemical/biohazard and glass/sharp objects waste are in the lab.
- 6) Clean after you... Do not leave the surface of the bench disorganized or dirty.

Interpersonal relationships

- 7) The laboratory members do not have to be like your bothers or sisters, parents, cousins or, even, friends... They are your colleagues...
- 8) Do not put loud music in the lab... Preferably, do not put music at all. Headphones are not a good idea since you may not be able to respond effectively in case of emergency.
- 9) Respect the personal and professional space and time of your colleagues.
- 10) Always do first what you ask or request from other people...
- 11) TALK... It is always important to talk directly to the person that is affecting you in the lab than going to the principal investigator or mentor first.
- 12) Do not gossip about lab members or your mentor...
- 13) Remember, if you are experiencing a stressful situation because of your research or academic duties is very likely that the other laboratory members are feeling the same way...
- 14) Engage your colleagues in "healthy" scientific discussion...

15) **Honesty:** NEVER lie! ALWAYS say the truth!!

16) NEVER call a colleague after working hours... unless in case of an emergency or he/she is expecting the call...

17) **Cell phones:** Keep your personal conversation to yourself... and not answer your cell phone or text with your gloves on...

18) Be open to criticism and criticize others... Always think that your colleague intention is to point out a weakness in your research work not on you as scientist. When criticizing a colleague, you have to be honest and with the sole intention of improving his/her work.

Lab space is for everyone to use

19) Always ask first. Do not turn any timer, instrument or light OFF without asking first.

20) **NEVER** leave an empty container in the refrigerator or chemical shelf. Report all reagents that you finished to the person in charge of placing purchase orders.

21) Do not leave common equipment dirty in the sink or bench.

22) Respect and treat the experiment of others like yours...

23) Keep your voice down...

24) Do your lab duties with responsibility and consideration to other members.

25) Use the lab computers responsibly and professionally. The computers and printers are for everyone to use... do not take possession of them...