



**Harvard University**  
**Recommended Work Practices for Laboratory Fume Hoods**

No large, open-face hood with a low face velocity can provide complete worker protection against all events that may occur in the hood. The hood may not adequately protect the worker from volatile or airborne contaminants with a low exposure limit (part per billion range). For more typical exposures, a well-designed hood in a properly ventilated room can provide adequate protection. However, certain work practices are necessary in order for the hood to perform adequately. The following work practices are generally required; however more stringent practices may be necessary in some circumstances.

1. Conduct all operations that may generate irritating and/or hazardous air contaminants inside a hood.
2. 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.
3. Do not lean into the hood or put your head in the hood when contaminants are being generated.
4. Do not use the hood as a waste disposal method (i.e. volatilize chemicals).
5. Do not store chemicals or apparatus in the hood. Store hazardous chemicals in an approved safety cabinet. Some hoods have acid or flammable storage cabinets below.
6. Keep the hood sash closed as much as possible. During use, position sash at or below the height indicated on hood evaluation label.
7. Keep the slots in the hood baffle free of obstruction by apparatus or containers.
8. Use equipment with legs or otherwise raise it off the work surface to allow even airflow under equipment, as well as around and over it.
9. Minimize sources of turbulence at the hood face (e.g., foot traffic, equipment, fans, moving arms in and out).
10. Keep laboratory doors closed, whenever possible.
11. Do not remove hood sash or panels except when necessary for apparatus set-up. Replace sash or panels before operating the hood.
12. Do not place electrical receptacles or other ignition sources inside the hood when flammable liquids or gases are present. No permanent electrical receptacles are permitted in the hood.
13. Use an appropriate barricade or shield, if there is a chance of explosion or eruption.

For further information concerning the use and/or performance of fume hoods contact Environmental Health and Safety at:

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