

Fume Hood Safety

Most labs are aware that here at UAB we certify each fume hood at least annually. What you may not realize is that we have on the order of 750 fume hoods campus wide. An overview of the inspections and a few reminders to last you through the year follows.

Occupational Health and Safety's (OH&S) Biosafety Division tests hoods based on the

average face velocity measured in feet per minute. The minimum face velocity that is acceptable is 80 for chemical and 100 for radioisotope hoods. This insures proper airflow and keeps potentially harmful vapors contained inside the unit. If you do not have a velocity gauge as part of your unit, you can do a simple test to make sure you have adequate airflow. Simply tape a strip of tissue paper to the bottom edge of the hood's sash. A strip of Kim Wipe works good for this.

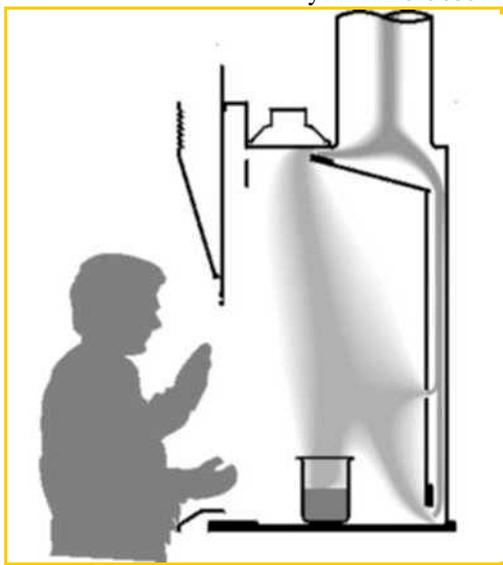
The airflow should be adequate enough to have some inward pull on the tissue paper. Just leave this strip of paper there year round to use as an indicator of airflow into the hood.

While an acceptable minimum face velocity is required, it is not desirable to have a face velocity that is too high. Excessively high air velocities can cause turbulence that can lead to vapors being released back into the room.

All fume hoods that meet the criteria for face velocity and fume hood general condition are posted with a yellow certification sticker. This sticker may also specify a maximum sash height for the hood to perform properly. It is important to keep the sash at the level indicated. Raising the sash above this level often times will result in a face velocity that is too low to contain potentially hazardous material and vapors. If the hood does not meet certification criteria, OH&S will place a warning sign on the sash. It is very important that the fume hood not be used until this sign is removed. Only OH&S staff is

authorized to remove this document. You can check the status of your hood repair simply by calling the number listed on the sign.

If you have a fume hood in your lab, please take a moment and make sure it has recently been tested. OH&S keeps a list of all fume hoods located at UAB and the current certification status of each. New labs are being built while others are being remodeled and /or closed continuously. If you discover a hood which you plan to use that has not been certified within the year call 5-5035.



One final reminder regarding fume hoods, there are many differences between fume hoods and biological safety cabinets. They do, in fact, serve different purposes. While both are used to protect us, biological safety cabinets are used for microbiological materials and afford product protection. Fume hoods only afford personnel protection and should never be used with hazardous biological materials! If you would like more information regarding the differences between

biological safety cabinets and fume hoods and are curious if you are using the correct type of equipment, you can call 4-9181.

Here are few more safety reminders:

- Always make sure the hood is operating prior to use.
- Keep all work about 6 inches inside the hood.
- Keep the sash closed except when doing work that requires attendance.
- Always operate the hood at or below the height indicated on the sticker (if no sticker is present, that hood is safe to use with the sash fully open).
- Keep the slots and baffles, located on the rear wall of the hood, free of obstruction by keeping containers and beakers toward the middle of the hood.

- Only place materials used in the current procedure in the hood. A fume hood is not designed for storage of hazardous materials!
- Do not put your head in the hood while hazardous materials are being used.