GOOD WORK PRACTICES FOR USING A CHEMICAL EXHAUST HOOD

Laboratory Chemical Exhaust Hoods are the most important engineering control used to protect laboratory personnel from exposure to hazardous materials and agents used in the laboratory. The purpose of a laboratory hood is to prevent or minimize the escape of contaminants from the hood to the laboratory air. For the reason, all work involving the use of hazardous materials should be conducted within a properly functioning Chemical Exhaust Hood.

Hood performance efficiency depends on an adequate and uniform velocity of air moving through the hood face or sash opening. Hood performance is adversely affected by many factors including mechanical malfunction, drafts or open windows, and poor operating procedures of the person or persons using the hood. Below are examples of good work practices for using Chemical Exhaust Hoods:

1. Always ensure that the hood you plan to use has been certified within the past year.
2. Use a visual indicator to ensure that the hood is working.
3. Set up work at least 6 inches behind the plane of the sash to avoid turbulence at the sash edge.
4. Never put your head inside an operating hood to check an experiment. The plane of the sash is a barrier between contaminated and uncontaminated air.
5. Work with the sash in the lowest position possible. The sash will act as a physical barrier in the event of an accident or chemical spill within the hood.
6. Do not clutter the hood with unnecessary bottles or equipment. Do not use the hood for storage. Only materials actively in use should be in the hood. This provides optimal containment and reduces the risk of extraneous chemicals being involved in a fire or explosion if one occurs.
7. Do not obstruct the back slots of the hood. Clean the grille along the bottom slot of the hood regularly so that it does not become clogged with objects or paper.
8. Do not dismantle or modify the physical structure of the hood in any way. Unauthorized modifications may result in associated repair costs and performance testing to be billed to the laboratory group or person who performed the modifications.