



Checklist for Safe Use of Biological Safety Cabinets

This checklist is a template you can edit and modify as necessary to incorporate your laboratory-specific standard operating procedures (SOPs). Use this checklist as a daily reminder of the activities/tasks needed for safely working in a Biological Safety Cabinet (BSC), as a training tool, or for annual audit of operational protocols.

Biological Safety Cabinet (BSC) Checklist

Preparing for Work in a BSC:

- ☐ Put on PPE according to your laboratory SOP.
- ☐ Turn UV light OFF (if used).
- ☐ Turn fluorescent light ON.
- ☐ Turn the blower motor ON, allow it to run for 4 minutes (or Manufacturer's recommended time) to purge the BSC of particulates. Some cabinets may alarm until purge is complete.
- ☐ Verify proper sash height and that sash alarm is ON.
- ☐ Verify drain valve underneath the cabinet is closed (valve handle is perpendicular to valve body).
- ☐ Check cabinet's certification sticker expiration date is within 1 year.
- ☐ Record the pressure differential gauge reading (if present), compare it against the calibration set point.
- ☐ Verify inward airflow according to your laboratory SOP (e.g., tissue test, smoke test).
- ☐ Schedule uninterrupted work time, if possible.
- ☐ Decontaminate all surfaces of the cabinet, according to your laboratory SOP.
- ☐ Collect all materials needed for the work.

Safe Use of a BSC:

- ☐ Place absorbent plastic-backed material to protect the work surface, if required by your lab SOP.
- ☐ Wipe the external surfaces of any equipment or supplies that you will need to place in the BSC.
- ☐ Place materials as far back in the cabinet as practical without blocking front and rear grilles.
- ☐ Separate clean/sterile items from dirty/potential contaminated items inside the BSC.
- ☐ Work from clean to dirty to minimize cross-contamination.
 - ☐ One person at a time should work in a cabinet. If two people need to work in a BSC, use a 6' cabinet and document the protocol-driven need in a risk assessment completed by the Lab Supervisor prior to starting work.
- ☐ Move your arms slowly in and out of the BSC. Do not move arms in sweeping, sideways movements.
- ☐ If using the vacuum system, protect the vacuum line with a filter.
- ☐ Do not use open flame without approval from the Safety Office.
- ☐ Adjust the stool/bench height so your face is above the bottom of the sash and your arms enter the cabinet with elbows at 90° angles, armpits level with the bottom of the sash. Use a footrest if your feet do not touch the floor.
- ☐ Discard all waste in a biohazard bag **inside** of the BSC.

After Completing Work in a BSC:

- ☐ Do NOT turn blower motor OFF while removing items and decontaminating the cabinet.
- ☐ Close and surface decontaminate ALL containers and lab materials before removal.
- ☐ Surface decontaminate the exterior of the biohazard waste bag/container before removal and disposal.
- ☐ Decontaminate cabinet interior, including sidewalls, back wall, inside of sash and work surface.
- ☐ Remove the gloves you were using in the BSC and dispose of them according to your laboratory SOP.
- ☐ Turn fluorescent light and blower motor switches OFF.
- ☐ If required by your lab SOP, turn UV light ON. Keep the sash closed while the UV light is on.
- ☐ Wash your hands.

This job aid is a component of the free, on-demand CDC training course “Fundamentals of Working Safely in a Biological Safety Cabinet.” Find the course at <https://www.cdc.gov/labtraining>.

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