LABORATORY SAFETY GUIDELINES

1. Your concern for safety should begin even before the first activity. Always read and think about each laboratory assignment before starting.

2. Know the location and use of all safety equipment in your laboratory. These should include the first-aid kit and fire extinguisher.

3. Wear a laboratory coat or apron and protective glasses or goggles for all laboratory work.

4. Wear a mask if you are dealing with fumes or harmful chemicals. Wear shoes (rather than sandals). Casual dresses such as shorts, sleeveless shirts and loose clothes should be avoided.

5. Clear your bench top of all unnecessary materials such as books and clothing before starting your work.

6. Check chemical labels twice to make sure you have the correct substance. Some chemical formulas and names differ by only a letter or number. Pay attention to the hazard classifications shown on the label.

7. Note expiry dates on chemicals.

8. You may be asked to transfer some laboratory chemicals from a common bottle or jar to your own test tube or beaker. Do not return any excess material to its original container unless authorized by your supervisor.

9. When you finish your work, do not leave your chemicals unattended on benches.

10. Avoid unnecessary movement and talk in the laboratory. Avoid distracting other workers. Maintain an appropriate distance from your equipment. Handle it responsibly.
11. Any laboratory accident, however small, should be reported immediately to Lab instructor / Lab In-charge.

12. In case of fire, use fire extinguishers. Evacuate the space and notify others.

13. Never look directly down into a test tube; view the contents from the side. Never point the open end of a test toward yourself or your neighbour.

14. Never taste laboratory materials. Food or drinks should not be brought into the laboratory. If you are instructed to smell something, do so by fanning some of the vapour toward your nose. Do not place your nose near the opening of the container. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap after handling chemicals or biological materials.

15. In case of a chemical spill on your skin or clothing rinse the affected area with plenty of water. If the eyes are affected water-washing must begin immediately and continue for 10 to 15 minutes or until professional assistance is obtained. Minor skin burns should be placed under cold, running water.

16. When discarding used chemicals, carefully follow the instructions provided. Each lab has an area with receptacles for collecting waste. Only discard waste in waste containers – can be mixed only if compatible.

17. Cylinders must be secured in upright position. Use suitable racks, straps, chains or strands to support the cylinders.

18. Before leaving the laboratory, ensure that gas lines and water faucets are shut off and switch off the power supply to the experimental setup. The glassware and work place must be properly cleaned.