Laboratory Safety: General Rules

1.) Always wear your lab coat when in the lab. Lab coats must be knee length, cotton or polyester/cotton blend, with long sleeves always worn fully buttoned. Lab coats should not be worn outside of the lab and must not be removed from the lab unless they have first been autoclaved (sterilized). Long pants or slacks made of a natural fiber (i.e., cotton, linen, silk, and wool) and shoes made of a waterproof or water resistant material that FULLY cover the feet must be worn in the lab (NO BALLET FLATS). Artificial fibers may be highly flammable or reactive with chemicals. You will NOT be allowed in the lab without proper apparel.

2.) Food, drink or gum chewing is not permitted in the lab. Do NOT chew on your pencil or pen.

3.) Clean your work area with Lysol or 70% ethanol and paper towels BEFORE AND AFTER use. Lysol and 70% ethanol are the disinfectants used in this lab. Both of these are very flammable so be careful when using. Place the used paper towels into the regular waste containers.

4.) Never pipet anything by mouth. Pipetting aids must be used. Your instructor will demonstrate how to install the aids on the pipet. Holding the pipet incorrectly while installing the aid can cause the pipet to break and be thrust into or through your hand—could cause permanent damage.

5.) Wash your hands thoroughly with antimicrobial soap and water when you enter the lab, before you begin your experiments, whenever you depart the lab (after removing your lab coat), whenever you remove gloves from your hands, and whenever you may sneeze or cough onto your hand(s). If you have a known spill of culture onto any skin surface, wash the affected area twice with antimicrobial soap and rinse with 70% ethanol (70% EtOH) between washings.

6.) In case of a spill or accident with any contaminated material (presence of any organisms) INFORM YOUR INSTRUCTOR IMMEDIATELY, flood the contaminated area with Lysol or 70% ethanol and cover with paper towels. After fifteen minutes, put on rubber gloves, pick up the towels and contaminated material and place them into a small plastic bag. Deposit the plastic bag into a biohazard container. The dust pan and brush must be rinsed with water and sprayed with Lysol afterwards. Wash your hands thoroughly with antimicrobial soap and water.

7.) Deposit NOTHING THAT IS CONTAMINATED into the wastebasket. Used gloves are considered to be contaminated. Deposit only NONCONTAMINATED broken glass into a Sharps disposal container.

8.) Clean your work area when finished, return supplies and equipment to the appropriate place, and bring empty containers to the attention of your instructor.

9.) Cultures must be placed in an appropriate location after use (i.e., proper incubator, refrigerator, or discard area). Place petri dishes into the biohazard containers at the discard area.
Place tubes upright into the stainless steel racks on the sink at the discard area. Caps should be tight. Fill one rack or container completely before beginning another.

10.) Discard used Pasteur pipets and small plastic disposable measurement pipets, used cotton tipped applicators (swabs), wooden applicators, used tongue depressors, and used slides (EXCEPT commercially prepared slides and concave slides) into the small white biohazard bucket. **NEVER** deposit paper (especially paper towels) or rubber gloves into the white buckets. Glass serological and Mohr (measurement) pipets are placed gently, tip down, into the plastic pipet discards located at the end of each workbench. Please talk to your instructor if you have any questions about disposal.

11.) No mechanical vortex will be used in this laboratory. Your instructor will demonstrate how and when to suspend cells by hand to reduce aerosol production.

12.) Burners should not be left unattended when lit. Burners should be extinguished if not in use.

13.) It is best to NOT WEAR CONTACT LENSES in the laboratory if possible, wear glasses if that is an option. If you cannot wear glasses, DO NOT REMOVE, HANDLE, OR APPLY contact lenses in the laboratory.

14.) Gloves (latex, nitrile or vinyl) must be worn if the skin on the hands is broken or if a rash is present, and when so directed by your instructor. Used gloves are considered contaminated and will be discarded in one of the biohazard containers.

15.) Anyone who enters a microbiology lab who is immunocompromised or immunosuppressed must immediately make this fact known to the lab instructor.

16.) Know where all safety and first aid items are located and become familiar with emergency protocols.

17.) Cell phones and other electronic devices are not permitted at the lab benches for any reason. Your cell phone must be stored with your belongings at your desk.

Compliance is mandatory.

I hate read and understand the safety guidelines. I understand that these rules always apply to everyone in the microbiology lab at all times.

Printed Name _________________________ Signature __________________________________

Date: ____________________________________________