

4-6: Receipt and storage of supplies

Receiving and inspecting supplies

A system should be established so when supplies are received, personnel know what is expected. All supplies and reagents should be inspected as they arrive in the laboratory to be sure that they are in good condition and to verify that what is received is what was ordered.

In addition, the person receiving supplies should:

- sign their name verifying receipt of goods
- date each item received
- note expiration date
- store new shipment behind existing shipment
- create or update logbook records.

Storage

Storage of reagents and supplies is a very important part of inventory control. Good practices to keep in mind are:

- Keep the storeroom clean, organized and locked to protect the inventory.
- Make sure storage areas are well ventilated and protected from direct sunlight.
- Ensure storage conditions are in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, paying particular attention to any temperature requirements or other specifications, such as safety requirements.
- Use good shelving strong enough to support items, and organize items carefully on the shelves to prevent movement shifts or falls. Shelves should be attached firmly to support walls to prevent tipping.
- Ensure items are accessible to staff. Sturdy step stools should be available for reaching higher shelves and heavier items should be stored on lower shelves; laboratory staff should not be required to lift heavy items.
- When storing, put the new shipment behind existing materials that are already in the laboratory. Organize the reagents and materials so that the older materials get used first (i.e. items with the first expiry dates are the first used).

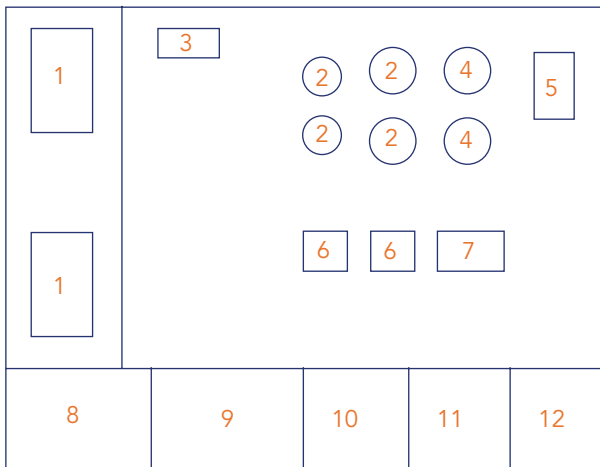


Organization of shelves

Labelling shelves is a useful tool for storing inventory and will help to systemize and organize storage space.

- Assign a number (or name) to different areas of the shelves.
- Record in the logbook what shelves are used for which reagents and supplies.

This system helps to avoid “losing” a product, and will save staff time when searching for a product. Even someone who is not familiar with the storeroom can find a product if this system is in place. It is also useful to number cold rooms, refrigerators and freezers for the same purpose. An example of this type of system is shown below.



Labelling reagents

Establishing a system for labelling reagents will be very helpful. It is important to label reagents with the date they are opened and to make sure the expiration date is clearly visible.