

Safe Working Procedure for the Use of Naked Flames

Naked flames, whether from Bunsen burners, spirit lamps or glass blowers torchs, have a long and venerable history in chemistry. Nevertheless, naked flames pose a high risk of fire, especially in the presence of volatile solvents. A flame, for instance, can ignite the ether vapour from an open container, even on the other side of the lab.

Alternatives

Whenever possible, alternative, safer methods of heating must be employed. These include electrical hot plates and heating mantles.

Precaution

If a naked flame is the safest and most effective method for the heating in question, then it should only be used in a well ventilated fume cupboard or other space designed for flame use. There should be no flammable materials in the vicinity. In particular, there must be no organic solvents present. Users must be aware of experiemts and other activities being conducted by others in the lab, must ensure that other workers in the lab are not using flammable materials in the vicinity and enusre that other workers in the lab are aware that a naked flame is in use.

A specific risk assessment must be completed for the use of the flame. A fire extinguisher must be close by, and the user must be familiar with the location of the nearest fire alarm.

The following personal protective equipment (PPE) is to be used: Safety Glasses, Lab coat, Long pants, Covered shoes

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