

Appendix A

Safety Rules Agreement (SRA)

The study of science involves the use of a variety of equipment and materials to observe, identify, describe, and investigate phenomena in the physical world. The emphasis on hands-on activities -- including those that present potential hazards -- makes safety in the science classroom the number one priority for students, instructors, and parents. A Safety Rules Agreement (SRA) can be an important tool to help ensure a safe science classroom. Below are two models of such agreements. Local school systems are encouraged to use these models in developing their own rules agreements tailored to the specific conditions and requirements of their science classes and laboratories.

A good SRA should include criteria for –

- student preparation for the laboratory,
- following instructions,
- basic precautions and procedures,
- proper handling of equipment and reagents,
- use of personal protective equipment,
- responding to emergencies,
- laboratory housekeeping,
- notification of parents, and
- consequences for failure to follow safety procedures.

Once established, the rules must be followed at all times. It is recommended that, as a condition of participation in the classroom or laboratory, teachers require each student and parent or guardian to sign the agreement. Teachers should file a copy of each student's signed agreement, and students should keep a copy in their science notebooks as a reminder of the laboratory safety rules in the science classroom.

The sample SRA's provided in Appendix A are designed for use in a typical high school laboratory environment and may require modification for use in elementary or middle schools or in specific courses. School systems may also want to debate the merits of using one SRA across the system or having different forms used by different schools within the system.