

Research Notebook

All product research and notes must be kept in a formal research notebook. This is for purposes of record keeping to protect intellectual property rights after the invention is completed.

The following guidelines should be followed with respect to all research notebooks:

1. At the beginning of a research notebook, leave 2-3 blank pages for creating a table of contents, which should be completed after the notebook is filled up.
2. Keep track of time spent in the lab in notebook.
3. A formal research notebook should be obtained as part of the materials of the project.
4. Ideas, calculations and experimental results should be entered into the notebook as soon as possible, preferably the same date they occur, so that the research notebook becomes a daily record of the researcher's activities.
5. All entries should be made in the notebook in permanent black ink and should be as legible and complete as possible. Clearly define all abbreviations, code names or product codes.
6. Draw a line through all errors. *Do not erase.*
7. Entries should always be made in the notebook without skipping pages or leaving empty spaces at the bottom of a page. If you wish to start an entry on a new page, draw a line through any unused portion of the previous page.
8. Never tear out or remove a page from the notebook.
9. Each page should be signed with the researcher's full name and dated. No entry should be changed or added to after signature. If the researcher has any additional information or corrections, a new entry should be made.
10. Each page of the notebook should be witnessed, signed and dated by a colleague who understands the researcher's work. This should preferably occur daily and certainly no less frequently than weekly.
11. If an additional entry is made between the initial and final pages recording an experiment, the entry should identify the page on which the previous entry for that experiment occurs.
12. When the research notebook is completely filled and is no longer required for reference, it should be indexed (fill in table of contents at start of notebook) and handled in accordance with the company's established record retention and destruction policy for such documents.

Some factors which reduce the value or credibility of your research notebook:

- illegible entries are totally worthless;
- unsigned or undated pages are almost totally worthless;
- notebook pages which have not been witnessed are almost as bad as unsigned and undated pages;
- a long delay between the signing of the page by the researcher and the witness raises questions;
- consecutive notebook pages which are not dated in chronological order raise questions;
- missing notebook pages raise questions;
- erasures and deletions raise questions -- instead, any later discovered mistakes should be corrected and explained on the next available blank page, referencing the page with the mistake.