

Centrifuging Safely

Suggestions for Safe Use

Centrifuge tubes are intended for use by persons knowledgeable in safe laboratory practices. Failure can result from surface damage, exceeding the specified RCF values, using unsuitable support systems, improper temperatures, or incompatible chemicals.

1. **CAUTION:** When centrifuging pathogenic organisms, clinical specimens known or suspected of being infectious, or any other potentially biohazardous materials, approved safety containment systems should be used. Contact your centrifuge manufacturer for appropriate accessories or recommendations.
2. Read protocols and instruction manuals carefully. Do not confuse speed or revolutions per minute (RPM) with relative centrifugal force (RCF). Instructions for centrifuging a sample at a given RPM and time are incomplete unless the rotor or radius is specified. Protocols should always state the time and RCF value for centrifuging a sample.
3. Proper balancing and distribution of the load in a centrifuge is critical for optimum performance and to prevent damage to the tubes or centrifuge. Opposing buckets or loads should always be balanced within the range specified by the manufacturer. Tubes should always be distributed in the buckets with respect to the center of rotation as well as the pivotal axis of the bucket. Failure to do this may prevent the bucket from achieving a horizontal position during the centrifugation run. Uneven separations or tube failure may result.