

Safety Recommendations for Home Nurseries

[Version 10]

Section 1: Safe Practices

1. **All cultivation site modifications should comply with San Francisco building, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical code.**
2. **Stealing power is illegal.**
3. The combined load of all devices, cultivation related and otherwise, must not exceed the electrical capacity of the main panel and grounding system. For a 100 Amp service, no more than 80 Amps (or 80%) may be used continuously.
Explanation: Continuous current draw reduces wire ampacity.
4. No more than (1) 1000W lamp, **or** (2) 600W lamps, **or** (3) 400W lamps may be loaded onto a household 120V, 20 amp circuit.
Explanation: A twenty amp circuit will only support 16 amps of continuous current draw. Auxiliary equipment needs to be placed on a separate circuit, allowing overcurrent conditions from malfunctioning or aging ballasts to be tolerated without hazard to the individual or property.
5. Each of the above lighting combinations should be controlled by a timer with a minimum rating of 15 amps **inductive or ballast** load.
Explanation: Timers are commonly rated for 15 amp **resistive** loads, which will **not** permit safe operation of HID lamps. To emphasize, only inductive or ballast rated timers are acceptable.
6. Ballast servicing should only be conducted by a licensed electrician.
Explanation: Improper cord choice or internal wiring can result in electrical failure.
7. It is recommended that glass lenses be installed in all HID fixtures. Most manufacturers' instructions require that a glass lens be installed in fixtures outfitted with a metal halide bulb.
Explanation: Metal halide bulbs require a significantly higher pressure in the arc tube. As a metal halide ages the integrity of the glass tube is compromised, eventually resulting in rupture, delivering hot glass projectiles to the area under the lamp. A glass lens will assist in containing the debris, virtually eliminating the risk of fire. Metal halides should never be run for longer than their rated life, as the likelihood of rupture dramatically increases.
8. Any electrical device within six feet of a reservoir must be plugged into a GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter) receptacle.
Explanation: This will help protect the user from severe electrical shock. Never place any part of your body into a reservoir that has an electrical device (e.g. pump) or cord in direct contact with the solution.
9. Under no circumstances should windows be boarded over with rigid construction materials. Explanation: This is hazardous to fire fighting personnel and inhabitants.

10. All pesticides, fungicides, and dangerous chemicals should be stored in a locked container.
Explanation: Following manufacturers' use and storage recommendations prevents accidents.
11. Liquid and solid waste products should be disposed of in accordance with city and state law.
Explanation: Certain pesticides, fertilizers, and solid wastes (such as rock wool) can have negative impacts on the environment and human health when not disposed of properly. Up to 30 HID and/or fluorescent bulbs are accepted at Recology SF (Tunnel Ave Disposal Facility) for no charge.
12. Reservoirs should not exceed the weight capacity for any floor.
Explanation: Water weighs 8.34 pounds per gallon. A full one hundred gallon reservoir weighs more than 800 pounds, about one half the weight of an automobile.
13. Generators require permits in most cities.
Explanation: Noise, exhaust, and fuel storage are all potentially problematic.
14. **Though very few gardens ever experience a fire**, at least one fully charged and periodically inspected fire extinguisher should be easily accessible at every garden facility. The garden operator should be familiar with its usage.
Explanation: By checking the pressure gauge or by weighing the fire extinguisher, a full charge must be confirmed every six months. If a fire extinguisher is even partially discharged, it must be refilled by a qualified technician prior to being put into service again. Every five years a fire extinguisher must be emptied, pressure tested, and refilled.

Section 2: Promoting Good Neighbor Relations

1. External ventilation ports should be treated with carbon filters or ozone so as to prevent emission of odor, dust, soot, or any other debris that might disturb neighbors.
2. Loud power tools should only be used from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. San Francisco has a 24 hour ordinance that prohibits excessive noise at **any** hour of the day.
3. Low frequency vibrations emanating from fans, pumps, airstones, HVAC equipment, and other devices should be equipped with vibration absorbing controls such as rubber mounting pads and/or insulation so as to prevent noise from disturbing your neighbor. Low frequency vibrations are easily transmitted long distances through the frames of adjacent houses.
4. Maintaining a reservoir on a second story is highly inadvisable. If you must do this, keep in mind that a spill is inevitable.

In Conclusion:

Enjoy yourself! Also, please help minimize impact on your community by applying good sense. By following these guidelines you can show respect and help public servants protect the citizens of San Francisco.

The Recent Federal Memo:

The following excerpt was sent from David W. Ogden, Federal Deputy Attorney General to US Attorneys, dated 10/19/09:

“Typically, when any of the following characteristics is present, the conduct will not be in clear and unambiguous compliance with applicable state law and may indicate illegal drug trafficking activity of potential federal interest:

- unlawful possession or unlawful use of firearms; [interpretation: all firearm possession is unlawful in this context]
- violence;
- sales to minors;
- financial and marketing activities inconsistent with the terms, conditions, or purposes of state law, including evidence of money laundering activity and/or financial gains or excessive amounts of cash inconsistent with purported compliance with state or local law;
- amounts of marijuana [and/or plants] inconsistent with purported compliance with state or local law;
- illegal possession or sale of other controlled substances; or
- ties to other criminal enterprises.

[Please note that] ... clear and unambiguous compliance with state law or the absence of one or all of the above factors [does not] create a legal defense to a violation of the [Federal] Controlled Substances Act.” -David W. Ogden, Federal Deputy Attorney General

Any questions regarding this statement should be directed to your attorney.

Handy Tips

1. Keep your medical recommendation(s) current and posted.
2. Verify the plant and weight restrictions in the county where you reside.
3. Obtain sound legal counsel prior to starting a nursery.
4. Focus your efforts on quality rather than quantity.
5. Familiarize yourself with the subject by reading a book.
6. Safety in numbers. Join a local advocacy organization and support your cause.