

home appliances in lab

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I'm reading about a lab that was designed to use certain home appliances, including a washer and drier for clothes, a refrigerator and a dishwasher.

I have a few questions about these applications of home appliances:

(1) I'm guessing the washer and drier would be used for lab coats. Maybe there are some precautions and procedures that have to be followed, deriving from the safety of putting the lab coat in the washer/drier and the regulations for waste disposal in case there are chemicals on the coats.

What are they?

(2) Since one isn't supposed to eat in the lab and the layout shows the refrigerator squarely in the laboratory, I have to assume the fridge is used for samples or certain chemicals. It is a chem lab, not a biology lab, so I'm not sure when it would be appropriate to use a home refrigerator in a chem lab and what kinds of precautions are necessary.

I'm not sure but I think I read elsewhere that there are specially designed refrigerators for chem labs and that one can't get away with using refrigerators intended for home use instead.

(3) It's natural to guess that the dishwasher, which is also squarely in the laboratory, is used to wash laboratory glassware, TLC slides, etc. The only thing is that I've never seen a home dishwasher used for that purpose.

So, again, I'd like to know when it is appropriate to do so and what precautions are involved, both for safety and for waste disposal.

I guess I have one other question, not really contained in the home appliance question: suppose you go to someone's laboratory and you observe a condition that you believe to be unsafe and illegal. What legal problems can you incur if you do not report the condition, first to the people who operate the laboratory, and, if they don't do anything about it, to the proper authorities? This is a hypothetical question. I was just wondering whether it might make sense to decline an invitation to look at someone's lab in order to avoid the possibility of incurring any liability in case I do notice something.

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Ignorantly,

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* Disclaimer: I am a guest and *not* a member of the MIT CSAIL. My actions and * comments do not reflect in any way on MIT. Also, I am nowhere near Boston.