

## Procedure for Cleaning the Incubator

Regular cleaning of the incubator, while sometimes a chore, is a necessity to help protect your cells from contamination and to keep the incubator functioning properly. Carefully following these simple steps will keep your incubator clean, help reduce chances of contamination becoming established, and help keep your cells growing well. If you use an automated heat decontamination cycle that is proven to eliminate bacteria and fungi, you should not need to use a disinfectant, but you should still periodically clean the incubator to eliminate spilled liquids and dirt.

1. Move all the cultures to a different incubator. Or if the cleaning will not take very long, you can store them in a clean, disinfected plastic box that will keep them warm. Then, turn off the incubator, including turning off the gas supply.
2. Remove all the shelves, the shelf supports, and any brackets or air ducts. Empty the water reservoir and wipe it dry with a clean, lint-free cloth.
3. Clean all the internal surfaces, ducts, shelves, shelf supports, inner door, fan and door gaskets with mild soapy water. A mild dish detergent works well for this. Be sure to reach all the corners and crevices where dirt, dust and germs can hide. An incubator with coved corners makes this task easier.
4. Rinse these surfaces and parts using distilled water and wipe them dry again using a clean, lint free cloth.
5. Wipe the interior surfaces and parts with a diluted quaternary ammonium disinfectant. Follow this by wiping with 70% alcohol to remove any remaining traces of the disinfectant. Again, be sure to reach all the corners, and remember to treat the door gasket as well. Replace the internal parts.
6. Now you can turn the incubator heat back on and allow the incubator to dry completely. This should only take a moment or two, so do not leave the door open – that would only reintroduce new dust and contaminants!
7. If you have an automated decontamination cycle, you can run it now. After that cycle is complete, fill the water reservoir with sterile distilled water, and turn on the gas supply.
8. Remember to clean the incubator exterior to eliminate dirt and microorganisms that could find their way inside. If the top of your incubator is very dusty, it's likely that dust is passing into the incubator when you open the door, so it's important to clean the top as well. Use a lint-free cloth dampened in mild soapy water. Then wipe clean using a clean cloth slightly dampened in clear water. Dry the outside with a clean, dry cloth. Pay special attention to the door handles where everyone touches. Do not use any liquids or spray cleaners to clean a touch sensitive surface or display. Instead, use a dry microfiber cloth to clean these.

That's it, you're done! When the incubator has reached the set conditions, return your cells inside.

We are often asked "how do I clean my 100% pure copper incubator?" You can use the same procedure to clean copper that you would with stainless steel, including mild soapy water followed by a 70% ethanol wipe. It is okay to use a quaternary ammonium disinfectant, but it is not necessary due to copper's inherent properties.