

PerkinElmer has developed the following suggestions for handling Rubidium-86 after years of experience working with this high-energy beta and gamma emitter.

General handling precautions for Rubidium-86

1. Designate area for handling ^{86}Rb and clearly label all containers.
2. Store ^{86}Rb behind lead shields.
3. Wear extremity and whole body dosimeters while handling mCi (37 MBq) quantities.
4. Use shielding to minimize exposure while handling ^{86}Rb .
5. Do not work over open containers.
6. Use tools to indirectly handle unshielded sources and potentially contaminated vessels.
7. Practice routine operations to improve dexterity and speed before using ^{86}Rb .
8. Prohibit eating, drinking, smoking and mouth pipetting in room where ^{86}Rb is handled.
9. Use transfer pipets, spill trays and absorbent coverings to confine contamination.
10. Handle potentially volatile compounds in ventilated enclosures.
11. Sample exhausted effluent and room air by continuously drawing a known volume through membrane filters.
12. Wear lab coat, wrist guards and disposable gloves for secondary protection.
13. Maintain contamination and exposure control by regularly monitoring and promptly decontaminating gloves and surfaces.
14. Use end-window Geiger-Mueller detector, NaI(Tl) detector or liquid scintillation counter to detect ^{86}Rb .
15. Submit periodic urine samples for bioassay to indicate uptake by personnel.
16. Isolate waste in sealed, clearly labeled shielded container and hold for decay.
17. Establish surface contamination, air concentration and urinalysis action levels below regulatory limits. Investigate and correct any conditions which may cause these levels to be exceeded.
18. On completing an operation, secure all ^{86}Rb ; remove protective clothing; dispose of protective coverings; monitor and decontaminate self and surfaces; wash hands and monitor them again.

The dose rates due to energetic beta radiation can be much higher than dose rates due to gamma radiation from unshielded ^{86}Rb . Avoid direct eye exposure by interposing transparent shields or indirect viewing. Avoid skin exposure by indirect handling and prompt removal of contaminated protective clothing.

References

1. Kocher, David C., Radioactive Decay Data Tables, Springfield: National Technical Information Service, 1981 DOE/TIC-11026.
2. Kaplan, Irving, Nuclear Physics, New York: Addison-Wesley, 1964.
3. Calculated with computer code 'Gamma' utilizing decay scheme data from Kocher and mass attenuation coefficients for lead and mass energy absorption coefficients for air from the Radiological Health Handbook. Washington: Bureau of Radiological Health, 1970. The HVL reported here is the initial HVL for narrow beam geometry.
4. ICRP Publication 30, Part 2, Limits for Intakes of Radionuclides by Workers. Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1980.