

Are laboratory records important?

Lab and other records are vital in obtaining and defending a patent. The following set of rules will produce legally defensible documents for patent protection:

1. Use a bound, pre-numbered notebook for records, making entries on a daily basis. This format provides a day-to-day chronology.
2. Use the notebook to record the conception of the invention, laboratory data, drawings, and eventual reduction to practice. Each entry should have a title, date and be continued on successive pages.
3. Make entries in ink and do not erase; draw a line through mistakes in the text or drawings and enter the material in corrected form. Draw a line through blank spaces on the page.
4. Separate sheets and photographs, which cannot be incorporated into the notebook pages, should be referred to in an entry.
5. Sign and date all entries at the time they are made, and have them witnessed at least once a month. The witness should be an individual who is capable of reading the material and understanding it, yet was not involved in producing it. Additional witnesses should be obtained when something important or highly unusual is discovered. Remember that an inventor and his co-inventors cannot serve as their own witnesses.
6. Set aside a time for making notebook entries and observe it. Have two or more colleagues serve as witnesses on a regular basis.