How to Cap Your Evaporation Tubes to Avoid Water Contamination

Are you evaporating solvents that contain acetone?

Are you evaporating your extracts using a nitrogen blowdown system with a water bath?

If you answered YES to both of those questions, read on to make sure you are properly covering your evaporation tubes to prevent water from ending up in your extracts.

Step 1: Get yourself a roll of aluminum foil, a pair of scissors and something small and sharp (a ballpoint pen will do the trick!)

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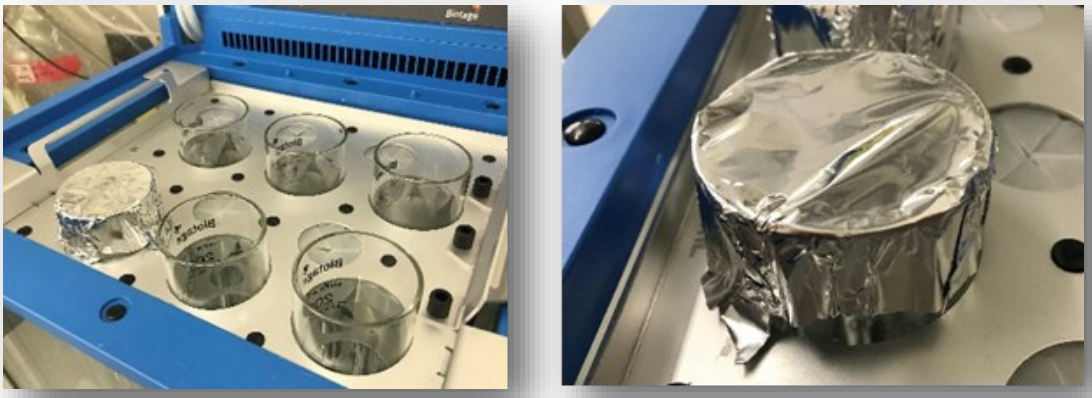
Step 2: Cut a square of aluminum foil (roughly 3 in x 3 in). Don't worry about being exact.

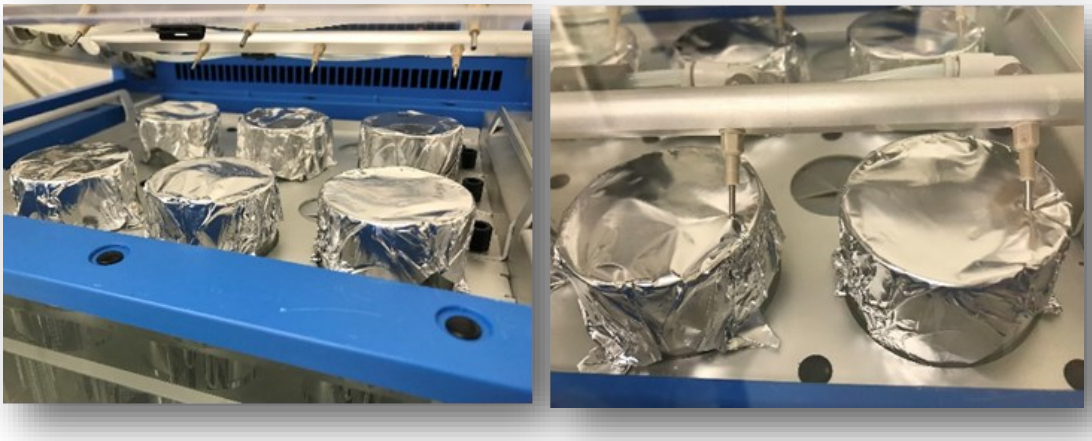
Step 3: Press the aluminum foil over the top of the tube, making sure it's snug.

Step 4: Slide the covered evaporation tube into the evaporator, making sure the edges of the tinfoil are trapped along the sides of the tubes.

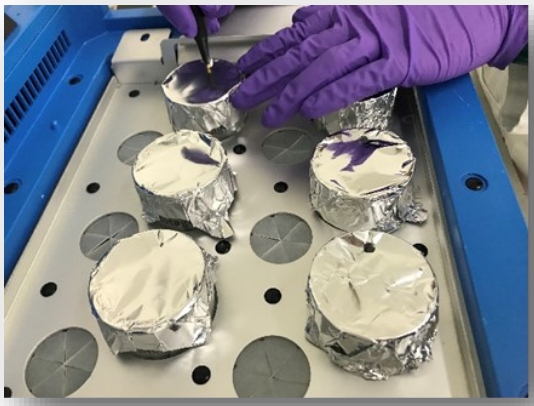
NOTE: If the foil is too loose, it will move around when the nitrogen gas turns on and won't cap the evaporation tube properly during the evaporation

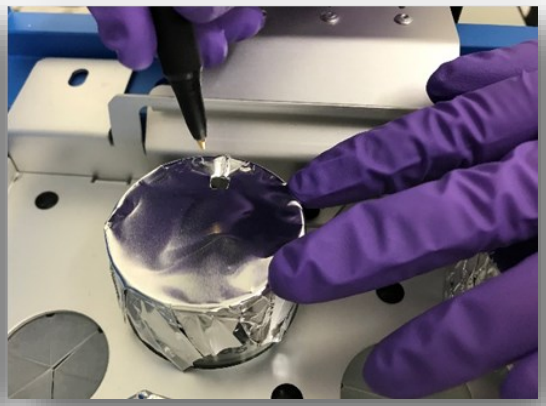


Step 5: Close the evaporator lid and let the nozzles find the top of the aluminum foil. Some of the nozzles will puncture the foil and some will not.



Step 6: Open the lid and puncture larger holes, approximately 1 cm in diameter (or the width of most ballpoint pens). Use the marks in the tin foil as your guide.





Step 7: Close the evaporator lid. Visually check the foil over each tube to make sure the nozzle goes through the hole correctly. If a nozzle is resting on top of the foil, twist the tube until the hole in the foil is properly aligned. Then you're ready to start your normal evaporation program!

NOTE: Capping your evaporation tubes will reduce your evaporation rates slightly. If you notice a significant change in the length of time it takes you to evaporate your extracts, you can puncture a second hole (~ 1 cm) in the foil. Just make sure you puncture it in a separate area to avoid tearing the first hole and causing it to widen.