

# Rules for Keeping an Engineering Design Notebook

A good engineering design notebook is one that can be used to reconstruct your work even years after you have completed the original project. Other engineers should be able to use the notebook to reconstruct your work. The notebook will be used to determine the rightful owner of patents and other proprietary ideas.

1. On the front of the notebook enter the project title, your name and other information needed to return the notebook to you in case it is lost.
2. Keep a table of contents at the front of the notebook.
3. All entries must be done in ink.
4. Design notebooks do not have to be neat but they must be legible.
  - a. Do not be obsessed with neatness at the expense of faithfully recording everything as it happens.
  - b. Do not crowd the materials on the pages.
5. Make your entries at the time you do the work.
  - a. Include all results and learned information whether favorable or unfavorable.
  - b. Include all information even if you do not fully understand it at the time of entry.
6. If you make errors, just cross them out with an X or a single line.
  - a. Do not mark through anything so that it cannot be read.
7. Do not erase anything.
8. Never tear a page out of the notebook.
9. All data must be in their original form (calculations, charts, pictures, sketches on scrap paper, etc.), not after recalculation or transformation.
10. Rough drawings should be done directly in the notebook. More careful drawings such as machine drawings or computer-generated plots should be made and entered in the book.
11. Information on loose sheets of paper should be entered into the notebook by:
  - a. Taping the loose paper to the next available blank page in the notebook
  - b. Taping each corner of the loose paper
  - c. Use a tape that will accept ink permanently
  - d. Place your signature on the loose paper, continue across the tape and end on the design notebook page. Sign across each corner of the taped paper. Date the signature.
12. Information that can be retrieved easily (such as research articles from journals) should not be entered into the notebook. Enter only the needed information and the location and the location of the information in case you must retrieve it again.

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13. Title each page of the notebook and enter the information on the Table of Contents.
14. Sign and date the notebook page at the space provided at the bottom.
15. Have your design entries witnessed and have the witness sign and date at the space provided.
  - a. The witness needs to have the technical ability to understand the entry.
  - b. The work can be witnessed periodically.
16. Every page of the notebook must be numbered.
17. No pages should be skilled. This is a chronological record of your work.