

USC PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT STANDARDS WHEN WORKING WITH HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be worn by students, employees and visitors entering areas with known or potential exposure(s) to hazardous materials. Supervisors are required to ensure PPE use according to these standards. PPE includes lab coats, eye protection, gloves, face shields, etc. The Office of Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) will provide guidance on appropriate PPE for specific activities and hazards.

Minimum Requirements

All university personnel (including all students and employees) who enter or work in laboratories and other areas that contain hazardous materials, including chemicals, biological agents and radiological materials or dangerous equipment must:

- At a minimum, wear full-length pants (or clothing that otherwise fully covers the legs and ankles) and closed toe/heel shoes, regardless of whether work with hazardous materials is being performed at the time of entry.
- As determined by a hazard assessment, wear hazard appropriate laboratory coats (or equivalent protective garments), ANSI approved protective eyewear and other appropriate PPE when work with hazardous materials is being performed.

In addition, workers in immediately adjacent areas who have the potential to be exposed to chemical splashes or other hazards, as determined by standard operating procedures and/or a hazard assessment, are required to don similar levels of PPE.

Laboratory Coat Specifications

All laboratory coats must be:

- Appropriately sized and, if necessary, fitted for the worker. This includes ensuring that laboratory coat sleeves are of a sufficient length to prevent direct skin exposure while the worker is wearing gloves.
- Buttoned/snapped to their full length.
- Flame Resistant (FR-rated) if:
 - The worker/lab personnel is working with any amount of pyrophoric materials;
 - The worker/lab personnel is working with flammable liquids in a laboratory using open flames or other potential ignition sources; or
 - Required by the Hazard Assessment.

Each school or department will provide professional laundry services for lab coats and other protective clothing at no cost to workers. Workers are not permitted to launder laboratory coats at a private residence or public laundry facility. If a laboratory coat or other protective clothing is contaminated with hazardous materials, the worker must provide the contaminated coat to the school or department. The school or department is then responsible for ensuring that coats are decontaminated prior to being laundered or, as appropriate, discarded.

Implementation

EH&S will work with supervisors and instructors to complete a hazard assessment that will specify potential hazards that require the use of PPE. The hazard assessment shall identify whether PPE is required beyond the minimum university requirements, and under what conditions. The formal hazard assessment should be repeated when new hazards are identified or introduced into the workplace, work processes have changed, or at least every three (3) years.

Supervisors must ensure workers know how to properly don and doff, adjust and maintain assigned PPE, and must document training. EH&S will provide guidance and resources to assist with this training.

Supervisors are responsible for periodically re-evaluating the selection and use of PPE in work areas under their control. EH&S will provide assistance, as needed.

Requirements Applicable to Students:

Course syllabi for academic courses that include laboratory, shop or field work should specify PPE requirements (including specifications of the type of PPE). Students enrolled in courses with PPE requirements may be responsible for purchasing all required PPE, with the exception of common communal PPE such as thermal protective equipment, welding aprons, face shields, etc., which will be provided by the sponsoring department. The instructor of record for a course, or his or her designee, is responsible for ensuring that students are familiar with and trained on the proper use of required PPE. A student not wearing PPE in a laboratory/technical area as required in their course syllabus may not participate in lab activities until such PPE is worn. Recommendations for laundering of lab coats belonging to students in teaching laboratories are dependent on the quantities and types of materials used. Written instructions for laundering will be developed with guidance from EH&S and provided by course instructors.

Exemptions

All requests for exemptions from any requirement set forth in this PPE standard must be submitted in writing to the Campus-wide Chemical Safety Committee (CCSC). The CCSC is charged with review and approval of all such requests, and will consult as appropriate with other safety committees (e.g., Institutional Biosafety Committee, Radiation Safety Committee, etc.) as well as the applicable Dean and/or Department Chair to assist in making this determination.

Non-Compliance

Failure or refusal to wear required PPE will prohibit individuals from entering or working in a facility containing hazardous materials and may result in corrective action in accordance with University policies and procedures.