PPE - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Do I have to wear my safety glasses while working at my desk which is located in a lab where hazardous materials are used?
A: You are not required to wear safety glasses while working at your desk if your desk is separated (physically or by distance) from the benchtop and contamination is unlikely.

Q: Can I wear shorts/open toe shoes if I am just going to be sitting at my lab desk all day?
A: Shorts and open toe shoes should never be worn in the lab where hazardous materials are used.

Q: Do I have to wear my safety glasses when working at a microscope?
A: Safety glasses may be temporarily removed while viewing materials via a microscope in the laboratory.

Q: Where do I get safety glasses? Does EHS supply safety glasses? Where can I order?
A: Safety glasses are readily available on campus. Various styles of safety glasses can be found in the laboratory support stockrooms and on Sciquest in the EHS Favorites folder. EHS also has a supply of safety glasses and provides them at various lab safety training programs and upon request.

Q: Can I wear a skirt in the lab?
A: This is generally not the best choice, because legs need to be covered to provide adequate protection in laboratories where hazardous materials are used. If skirts are worn, high boots, leggings, yoga pants, or other leg coverings must also be worn to protect exposed skin.

Q: Do I have to wear a lab coat to enter/be in a lab?
A: No, a lab coat is not generally necessary to be worn to enter most labs on the Yale Campus. A lab coat does need to be worn when handling hazardous materials.

Q: Who has to complete a Lab PPE Assessment and how do I do this?
A: OSHA regulation requires employers to conduct a PPE hazard assessment. Principal Investigators are responsible for the safety in their laboratory and are therefore the most knowledgeable and best equipped to conduct this assessment. EHS has developed an online tool to assist in this assessment, called the LHAT (Lab Hazard Assessment Tool): https://ehsis.yale.edu/EHSIntegrator/Survey/LabPPE.

Q: What do I tell visitors/vendors to my lab about their entrance requirements?
A: Visitors to the lab need to be dressed appropriately. PPE needs to be provided to visitors if warranted. Routine visitors to Yale labs such as custodians have been instructed in appropriate attire and PPE requirements.
Q: Do the same PPE requirements apply in labs where chemicals are not present?
A: The PPE Procedure for Laboratories applies to laboratories where hazardous materials are present and/or used. This includes chemical, radioactive, and biological materials. An assessment and good judgment about necessary PPE should still be used to clarify requirements in labs without hazardous materials.

Q: What are the requirements for wearing PPE outside of the laboratory?
A: Gloves and lab coats must not be worn in common areas, such as cafeterias, lunch rooms, conference rooms, offices and libraries. For laboratories in which human pathogens are used or where sterile products are produced, lab coats may not be worn outside of the laboratory. In other types of laboratories, a lab coat may be worn when traveling in a corridor between laboratories or support rooms, such as a cold room or an instrument room.

Q: I only work with buffers. Why do I need to wear safety glasses and proper laboratory attire?
A: It is important that there be a standard common to all laboratories for building a safety culture by widespread modeling of safe behaviors. If you feel that an exception can and needs to be made for your specific laboratory, then you may file a request for an exception when completing your LHAT.