

Safetycasts in a Minute

Personal Protective Equipment: Your Personal Barrier to Laboratory Exposure

- Opening -

Welcome to the National Institutes of Health Safetycasts in a Minute.

- Body -

- In this episode, we will discuss the importance of wearing necessary personal protective equipment, or PPE, required here in the laboratories at the NIH.
- What is PPE? PPE includes all clothing and accessories worn in the workplace to protect you from any hazards that may arise while performing the standard duties of your job.
- Examples of PPE include gloves, laboratory coats, safety glasses or goggles and other types of protective clothing that is designed to help you complete your job efficiently and safely.
- Federal Regulatory standards issued by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, or OSHA, and Appendix 1 of NIH Manual Chapter 1340, NIH Occupational Safety and Health Management Program, require workers to wear appropriate PPE in the lab.
- The appropriate attire and minimum PPE for performing any laboratory work includes wearing eye protection, lab coats, gloves, long pants and closed-toe shoes. Shorts and sandals are never allowed to be worn in the lab.
- As a rule of thumb, employees must wear clothing that prohibits direct contact of hazardous materials with their skin when present in laboratories. Other PPE may be required as determined through a risk assessment.

- Laboratory PPE requirements vary depending on a lab's Biosafety level. Determining the appropriate PPE is essential. Look for a sign posted outside of any lab to learn what PPE must be worn when working in that specific laboratory.

- The 4 types of signs you may see posted in laboratories working with pathogens or recombinant materials at the NIH Bethesda campus are BSL-1, BSL-2, BSL-2 with 3 practices, and BSL-3. Additional signage may be present, so carefully observe and follow the information at your location.

- Always remember that all PPE must be removed prior to exiting the lab in order to avoid contaminating clean spaces. All PPE, including laboratory coats and gloves, should be considered contaminated, even if working with nonhazardous material. This ensures your safety and the safety of the NIH community.

- At NIH your safety comes first and that starts with wearing the appropriate PPE. Remember, a job done safely is a job done well.

- For more information about Laboratory Coats and PPE, see NIH Guidance for the Selection of Laboratory Coats at, which can be found on the Division of Occupational Health and Safety website at <https://go.usa.gov/xCCae>