

Mandatory Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) use in Laboratories

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the following lab PPE is required at a minimum whenever in a lab, regardless of the materials being handled or the type of work being completed:

- Lab coat – must be worn upon entering the lab and completely fastened. Lab coats must include full sleeve coverage and cannot be altered;
- Safety Glasses – must be worn upon entering the lab. Over-glasses must be used over any prescription glasses that are not CSA approved.

In addition (and as always in USask labs), proper lab attire must be utilized including long pants (that cover the wearer to the ankle) as well as closed-toed and heeled shoes (with socks). Appropriate hand protection (e.g. chemical resistant gloves) must be worn when handling hazardous substances.

Masks are not considered mandatory PPE when physical (social) distancing can be maintained.

Disposable PPE and Reuse

All personnel are encouraged to utilize disposable PPE (e.g. gloves, masks, respirators) sparingly and ensure valuable PPE resources are not unnecessarily diverted from the healthcare system. Please refer to the [USASK Disposable PPE Reuse and Extended Use Guidelines](#) for more information on extended use of disposable PPE.

Cloth Masks

Cloth masks may be required when all other options for physical (social) distancing and safety controls have been deemed to be unfit. The voluntary use of cloth masks is acceptable but donning, doffing, and usage standards must be applied (link to these procedures when live).

Cloth masks are not a suitable alternative for tasks that require respiratory protection. These tasks should be evaluated and adequate amounts of PPE should be acquired prior commencing.

Medical Masks and Respirators

Medical masks and respirators must *only* be worn during tasks and procedures when deemed necessary through a hazard assessment. Medical masks and respirators must not be worn outside of these tasks and procedures. If an individual would like to utilize a face covering in common areas please wear a cloth mask to conserve critical PPE.

Cleaning and Storage

Lab coats and PPE should always be stored separately (e.g. individual hooks or hangers) in designated areas for each worker to avoid cross contamination of hazardous substances to clothing surfaces and other PPE. Avoid sharing PPE. Launder lab coats regularly (e.g. weekly for heavy use) and/or when soiled. Replace when necessary.

For more information, please see the Laboratory Safety Manual – Pandemic Supplement

