



SAFETY NOTICE

Return to Work - Lab PPE Guidance

RISK MANAGEMENT & SAFETY

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Category: Occupational Health
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USE OF CLOTH MASKS AND LAUNDERING OF LAB COATS IN LABORATORY SETTINGS

Cloth Mask Guidance

As laboratories begin to re-open, masks must be worn at all times in research buildings by all faculty and staff.

When working with combustible or flammable chemicals in a laboratory hood, a cloth mask should not be worn. Remove your cloth mask prior to working with these materials and do not allow it to hang around your neck. A flame retardant (FR) mask is an acceptable alternative and can be worn when working with flammable materials. The hood serves as an engineering control to prevent chemical exposure. If there is concern about chemical exposure while working in the laboratory hood, a respirator may be appropriate. Follow your laboratory protocol for wearing respirators. Contact RMS for assistance in evaluating the function of the hood or in determining if a respirator is necessary.

There currently is no guidance indicating the best mask fabric to prevent absorption or trapping of chemical vapors. However, when working with chemicals, a hood should be utilized. As indicated above, if you feel you are being exposed to chemical vapors, please contact RMS for assistance.

When working with combustible or flammable chemicals outside of a hood, use of a fire resistant (FR) mask is encouraged. These can be ordered through MSC Industrial Direct Co. Item # 15820319.

Lab Coat Laundering Guidance

Lab coats can be laundered through St. Michael's Laundry. When removing a lab coat do not shake it. They should be placed in an appropriate St. Michael's laundry bag for laundering and disinfection; never take a lab coat home for laundering. If you have two or more lab coats, it is suggested that you alternate the coat you wear every other day.

Please see the following link for more information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

All safety communications can be found at <https://riskmanagement.nd.edu/communication/safety-communication/>

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