

Eye Protection

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Reasons for wearing eye protection when working in the lab:



1. Many of the chemicals handled in the CLS labs can harm the eyes upon contact. Some may only give rise to temporary, mild irritation but others may cause permanent damage and, depending upon the extent of the exposure, blind you for life.
2. Eye damage may also be caused by flying projectiles, for instance if a glass or plastic container shatters or explodes, or if a piece of equipment fails during use and broken part is ejected at high speed.
3. Some pathogenic micro-organisms can enter the blood stream via the membranes around the eyes.

Types of Eye Protection

If you are working in a lab where liquids and solutions are being handled on the open bench there is always a chance of splashing, spraying or aerosol formation and appropriate eye protection should be worn. In the majority of cases, safety glasses are adequate.

Remember to pay attention to what is going on around you. The actions of your co-workers may put you at risk.

It's important to store your eye protection properly to avoid scratching the lenses/visor. Dispensing boxes are a good for storing safety glasses and coat hooks are recommended for face visors/shields.



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If risk assessment shows there is higher than normal risk of eye damage, perhaps due to the chemicals used or the nature of the procedure, it may be appropriate to wear safety goggles, which give better protection by due to the rubber seal all the way around the eyes, or a face visor/shield.

The chemical hazard assessment or safety data sheet will indicate when there is risk of severe eye damage/blindness. Corrosive chemicals are the usual culprits.

Forcing liquid through a system under pressure is one procedure where the likelihood of getting chemicals in your eyes is higher than average. A common example is forcing a solution through a syringe filter, especially if the filter is just slip locked, rather than being locked, onto the end of the syringe.

When flying projectiles are a concern an impact resistant face visor is usually preferred since it will also give protection to the face and neck.

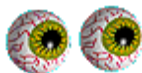
Such visors are used when working with liquid nitrogen, primarily due to the slim but very real chance of sample storage vials exploding upon removal from the LN2 cryostore.

Special visors, similar to the one pictured, are also used to protect against UV radiation when working with transilluminators that do not have their own safety-interlocked shielding. Make sure UV visors are clearly labelled as such and not easily confused with non-UV visors.



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First Aid for Eye Injuries



- If eyes become contaminated with a potentially harmful substance:
 - Rinse immediately with copious amounts of clean, cold water. Eyes must be held open during rinsing. There is no need to use sterile saline solution, tap water will do.
 - Summon a First Aider and they will advise if medical attention is required.
 - If no First Aider is available, seek medical attention immediately at A&E or your GP's surgery.
- If eyes are injured by a flying projectile and/or a foreign object becomes lodged in the eye:
 - Summon a First Aider immediately.
 - Cover *both* eyes with a sterile dressing.
 - Seek medical attention immediately at A&E or your GP's surgery.

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CLS Policy on Eye Protection

1. Eye protection must be worn whenever risk assessment shows it to be necessary.
2. Whatever eye protection is selected it must be: suitable for the purpose; comfortable to wear for the time period required; a good fit for the individual; well maintained; properly stored; regularly checked by the wearer; and repaired or replaced if it is found to be damaged or worn out. Safety Services provide [more detailed guidance](#) on choosing appropriate eye protection.
3. If wearers of prescription spectacles require safety glasses and if no suitable alternative can be found, prescription safety glasses will be provided. The relevant group/team leader must meet the cost. See the H&S Coordinator for further advice on sourcing prescription safety glasses.
4. If your eyes are adequately protected by another means, e.g. the glass visor of a fume hood or microbiological safety cabinet, or a radiation shield, personal eye protection is not required.
5. If you are working in an environment where the risk of eye damage is assessed as negligible, eye protection is not required.

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Page last updated: Tuesday, 15 May, 2007 . Site maintained by: Lisa Grayson