

Meeting to Discuss Policy on Wearing Lab Coats

Held on 3/11/05 in 112

Present: Irene Blair (IB), Lisa Grayson (LG), Gail Alexander (GA)

Recent debate about when lab coats should and should not be worn has flagged up the fact that SLS requires a clear policy on the wearing of lab coats that is applied across the board. This should prevent any specific group from feeling they are being forced to comply with rules that are not enforced in other areas of the School.

The purpose of this meeting was to draft a clear a policy on the wearing of lab coats within SLS buildings with the intention of putting it forward for approval at the SLS H&S Management Committee meeting on 25/11/05.

Initial proposals:

- Lab coats **must not** be worn in areas where food/drink is consumed.
- Lab coats **must not** be worn in offices, writing rooms and meeting rooms.
- Lab coats **must not** be worn in non-lab facilities outwith SLS, e.g. students union.
- Lab coats **must** be worn in laboratory areas, apart from those where work with potentially hazardous substances is **not** undertaken, e.g. computing labs, certain microscopy suites.
- Lab coats **must** be worn in areas where potentially hazardous substances are stored, e.g. chemical storage areas and waste storage areas.
- Lab coats **must** be worn when transporting potentially hazardous substances - e.g. chemicals, biological material or waste – between labs/stores.
- Lab coats **may** be worn when travelling through non-lab areas such as corridors, foyers, locker rooms and stairwells.
- In the research block:
 - Blue lab coats **must** be kept solely for use in CL2 TC suites. This is to keep contaminants (e.g. bacteria, yeast) from the general lab out of TC and to prevent potentially hazardous cell lines or viruses from being carried from TC into the general lab.
 - Dark green lab coats **must** be kept solely for use in the CL3 facility.
 - Disposable green gowns **must** be kept solely for use in supervised radioactive areas.
 - Clean, tidy, white lab coats **must** be worn in all other lab areas.
- All support staff (e.g. Technical, Stores, Porters, Wash-Up, Media, Above Floor Cleaners), research staff, teaching staff, students and visitors **must** adhere to the above.
- E&B, contractors and engineers not already wearing PPE (e.g. a boiler suit) must wear a disposable lab coat if they are working in areas where lab coats are required. In TC suites and radioactive areas a disposable lab coat **must** be worn, on top of own PPE if necessary.
- Soiled disposable lab coats **must** be disposed of immediately by the appropriate route.
- Soiled non-disposable lab coats **must** be decontaminated, if necessary, prior to sending to the Wash-Up facility for laundering. Make sure your name and location are marked on your lab coat in indelible ink before laundering.

Additional proposals:

- All personnel **must** wear disposable gloves whenever there is risk of contaminating the hands with a hazardous substance. Key points:
 - Ensure glove material is suitable for the purpose.
 - If you have a latex allergy, use nitrile gloves or glove liners.
 - Avoid touching your eyes and face while wearing gloves.
 - Remove your gloves and wash your hands before leaving the laboratory and before touching items that are normally handled without gloves, e.g. door handles, notebooks, catalogues, phones, computer keyboards etc.
 - If you must wear gloves when traveling through non-lab areas, get someone to open doors for you.
- Personnel **must** wear safety glasses whenever there is risk of eye. These may result from your own activity or from the activities of those around you. This applies to all personnel whether they are working in an area or simply passing through. If prescription safety glasses are deemed necessary these will be provided.