

OHS Safety Advice

Date: Thursday, 23 September 2010
Advice #: 10
Issue: *Eye Protection in Laboratories*
Reference: AS/NZS 2243.1:2005 Safety in laboratories – Planning and operational aspects
AS/NZS 1336:1997 Recommended practices for occupational eye protection
AS/NZS 1337.1:2010 Eye and face protection for occupational applications
AS/NZS 1338 series Filters for eye protectors
NSW OHS Act 2000, NSW OHS Regulation 2001
AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009 Risk management - Principles and guidelines
[UWS Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Control Procedure](#)
[UWS Laboratory Safety Guidelines](#)
Contact: OHS Technical Coordinators (Laboratories)
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The OHS Unit has been reviewing the appropriate selection and use of personal eye protection as a result of recent laboratory incidents. It has been identified that the types of personal eye protection (i.e. safety glasses) currently in use in some laboratory areas may not provide the necessary protection required for hazardous work being undertaken by staff and students.

Refer to Attachment 1 for information on eye protection requirements and selection and use of different types of eye protectors (eg safety glasses, goggles, shields).

Where a potential eye hazard exists for a particular task, the associated risks must be evaluated and assessed to determine the most appropriate risk control measures to be implemented, including the type of eye protection to be worn by staff and students.

Recommendations

It is recommended that all risk assessments relating to laboratory work with the potential for eye injuries be reviewed as soon as practicable to ensure that the appropriate eye protection is selected and that all staff and students are advised of any changes required. The risk assessment should also consider other hazards usually present in the laboratory, and take into account the overall work of the group (not just that of an individual).

It must be stressed that the use of eye protection, or other personal protective clothing or equipment (PPE), is the least effective form of risk control. Where elimination of risks is not possible, PPE must be used in conjunction with more effective or higher order risk controls such as substitution, isolation, and administrative controls (refer also to [UWS Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Control Procedure](#)).

Supervisors need to ensure that staff and students are aware of the correct type of eye protection to be worn for a particular task and that relevant training is provided in their proper use and in any limitations that may exist (refer to Attachment 1).

Local Management is responsible for funding and providing the appropriate Australian Standards approved eye protectors for employees, which may include prescription eye protectors where necessary.

Students are required to obtain the appropriate Australian Standards approved eye protectors for the work being undertaken, as directed by their supervisor, and at their own expense. Retail outlets of *uwsconnect* now stock Australian Standards approved splash resistant safety goggles in addition to the existing safety glasses that provide low impact protection.

Please contact the OHS&IS Unit if you require further information or advice regarding your specific operations.