

WTCHG Safety Eye Wear Guidance

Cross Reference to University of Oxford Policy Statement S8/10: Eye Protection

1. Background

As a direct result of the number of eye injuries which have occurred within the University Biological containment laboratories, it has prompted the requirement for eye protection to be reviewed.

In 2009 the University of Oxford Accident Statistics showed:

Six eye injuries were reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), under the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR). Four of these injuries involved basic laboratory agents, methanol, sodium hydroxide, formalin and sulphuric acid. All of the eye injuries involved a student. In addition to these eye injuries, there were 16 other reported eye injuries in 2009, 13 of which were recorded as not wearing eye protection.

2. Activities Requiring Eye Protection in the WTCHG referenced from the Eye Protection Policy S8/10:

- a. in laboratories during work with hazardous substances that could cause eye injury, during assembly of experimental equipment and when connecting gas under pressure, or when modifying or working with glass apparatus.
- b. in **all** biological containment laboratories, or other 'wet' biological laboratories, where infectious material or hazardous substances are present, where dissections may be undertaken, where animals may be inoculated with micro-organisms, including genetically modified micro-organisms.
- c. in biological support rooms, e.g. autoclave facilities or media preparation rooms where operators may sustain eye injury during the handling of both clean and contaminated loads.
- d. in kitchens or during domestic work when cleaning products which could cause eye injury are decanted or used;

In each case suitable eye protection must be supplied by the department, and be worn by the worker **as standard**. This applies to employees, students and visiting workers, or others in the vicinity of the work that may be affected by it. Where the use of eye protection is required then the blue mandatory safety signs will be displayed.



The mandatory signs will be posted on the entrance door of the laboratories and other areas in the Centre where the use of eye protection is mandatory.

In the circumstances where a risk assessment has identified that goggles or a face shield are required to be worn for a specific task, the person should remove their safety glasses and put on the safety goggles or face shield.

3. Write-Up Areas and Microscopy

Write-up areas within the laboratories should be clearly separated from 'wet' laboratory work. As a general rule, in the write-up areas where the research group supervisor has determined that the wearing of laboratory coats is not required, then safety eye wear would not be required, however where write-up areas are in close proximity to 'wet' laboratory work and the supervisor has determined there is a need to wear a laboratory coat, then safety eye wear should also be worn.

During the use of microscopes it is not practical to wear protective eye wear and therefore this will be accepted whilst the person is positioned at the microscope.

A risk assessment must be carried out for other tasks identified by the research groups where it is deemed unnecessary or impractical to wear eye protection.

4. Prescription Safety Eye Wear

All laboratory workers will be provided with their own pair of safety glasses. The Centre will provide prescription safety glasses to all laboratory workers who have a requirement to wear prescription lenses when working in the Centre's laboratories. Everyday prescription glasses may only be worn following an assessment of the design of the spectacles to ensure they provide sufficient protection to the eye from inadvertent splashing or exposure to low impact debris. The declaration form set out in Appendix 2 authorising the worker to wear their own prescription glasses should be signed by the Group Head and worker, and submitted to the Health & Safety Officer as soon as possible. Where prescription safety glasses are required they will be provided by the department and must have a CE mark against the P.P.E Directive 1995 and meet the requirements of BS EN166. A certificate of conformity will be issued by the optician. The prescription safety glasses certificate is valid for 24 months under normal wearing conditions. Costs of prescription safety glasses will be met by the department at a frequency of no more than one pair every 24 months unless prescribed by an optician in special circumstances.

See Appendix 1 for the arrangements for eye tests and prescription safety glasses.

5. Non-Prescription Safety Eye Wear

Supervisors must ensure that their group members have been issued with a pair of safety glasses. All new starters will receive a pair of safety glasses or cover specs at the same time as they receive their laboratory coats; before beginning their laboratory work.

Costs of non-prescription safety glasses will be met by the Department at a frequency of no more than one pair per year.

6. Safety Eye Wear for Visitors

Visitors to the laboratories can collect a pair of visitor safety glasses from the dispenser at the same time as they pick up their visitor laboratory coat. The person supervising the visitor is responsible for ensuring that the borrowed laboratory coat and safety glasses are returned. The safety glasses should be returned to the dispensing station in good condition and after being wiped down.

7. Care of Eye Protection

There will be lens cleaning stations in each of the main laboratories and next to the visitors' safety glasses dispensing station. The lens cleaning stations will contain a cleaning spray and wipes to clean the glasses without scratching the lenses.

Appendix 1

WTCHG Procedure for Eye Tests and Prescription Safety Glasses

If you are a Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics member and require prescription lenses whilst working in the Centre's laboratories, you are eligible for prescription safety glasses. The Centre will pay the full cost of the prescription safety glasses.

The frequency of repeat eye and eyesight testing for prescription safety eye wear is determined by the optician. This is usually every two years, but it can vary for individuals. Costs of prescription safety glasses will be met by the Centre at a frequency of no more than one pair every 24 months unless prescribed by an optician in special circumstances.

The first step for you to carry out is to email safety@well.ox.ac.uk to advise that you require prescription safety glasses. You should

- state whether or not you require an eye test and
- state what type of lenses you require in your safety glasses; single vision, bifocals or varifocals

The Health and Safety Officer will then email you to inform you that an External Order Request was made with the Accounts Team for Gardiners Opticians.

The Accounts Team will raise the purchase order and print it off for you to collect and take with you to your appointment.

After you collect your purchase order from the Accounts Team you should book your appointment at the opticians within six weeks. The optician to use is:

Gardiners, telephone: 01865 761459. The address is 5 Manor Buildings, Osler Road, Headington, OX3 7RA.

At your appointment with Gardiners you will choose from a selection of safety eye wear and the optician will ensure that the frames fit correctly.

When your glasses are ready for collection you must return to Gardiners to have them fitted and dispensed.

Appendix 2

Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics University of Oxford

PRESCRIPTION GLASSES - DECLARATION

This form is to be completed when a Group Head agrees to a request from a group member to wear their own everyday prescription glasses when working in the laboratory, rather than wear prescription safety glasses provided by the Centre.

Group:
Lab:

Declaration - To be completed by the Group Head:

I have considered all hazards in the laboratory, tasks to be completed by the group member and the design of their current prescription spectacles. In my view, the spectacles that I have seen provide sufficient protection to the eye from inadvertent splashing or exposure to low impact debris providing the group member observes the safety instructions and controls in place and set out in the group's laboratory safety folder.

Name:

Date:

Signed:
(Supervisor)

Declaration - To be completed by the group member:

- i. I have made a request to my Group Head to wear my own prescription glasses, rather than wear prescription safety glasses provided by the Centre, and have shown him/her the glasses I intend to wear. I understand the arrangements necessary to work safely wearing my own prescription glasses and will observe the safety instructions and implement all controls specified before starting any work. I understand that I will need to seek further agreement from my Group Head if I wish to wear a different style/design of prescription glasses to those that I have shown to my Group Head prior to signing this form.*
- ii. I am aware that overspecs are available should my work entail a greater risk of splashing.*
- iii. I accept that the University will not provide any reimbursement for damage or loss to my prescription glasses due to splashes or low impact debris whilst working in the laboratory.*
- iv. My Group Head may at any time withdraw permission to wear my own prescription glasses in view of safety concerns and request that I wear prescription safety glasses provided through the Centre.*
- v. I am aware that I am able to request prescription safety glasses through the Centre should I no longer wish to wear my own prescription glasses and I will need to contact the Health and Safety Officer to arrange this.*

Name:

Date:

Signed:
(Group Member)

PLEASE PLACE THIS DECLARATION IN THE LABORATORY SAFETY FOLDER AND RETURN A COPY TO THE DEPARTMENTAL SAFETY OFFICER.