



University of Western Ontario

Eye Protection Policy

Prepared by: Environmental and Laboratory Safety Committee

Revised: June 2006

Supersedes: February 2005

PURPOSE

This policy is designed to minimize the potential for eye injury by the provision and use of the correct type of eye protection. This policy enables the University to comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations pursuant to that act.

RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of all budget unit heads, supervisors, instructors and teaching assistants to ensure that all employees, students, and visitors wear suitable eye protection when in an area where potential eye hazards are present. It is the responsibility of all persons to wear the appropriate eye protection in a designated area.

APPLICABLE LEGISLATION

Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), R.S.O. 1990, Sections 25, 27, 28
O.Reg. 851, R.R.O. 1990, Industrial Establishments, Sections 29, 36, 79, 81, 84, 137

APPLICATION

1. Approved safety glasses with side shields are the minimum requirement and must be worn at all times in a laboratory in which hazardous chemicals or biohazardous materials are used.
2. In all other cases, persons exposed to an eye hazard from physical objects (i.e. impact hazard), chemical substances (splash or vapour hazard), harmful radiant energy, and nuisance dust, must wear eye protection. Such hazards may include but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Sparks, open flame and spatters.
 - b. Molten metals.
 - c. Research activities involving high energy, flying particles, and the possibility of explosion or implosion of vessels.
 - d. Toxic, poisonous, irritating, or corrosive chemicals.
 - e. Glass, wood or metal processing, particularly grinding, welding, chipping, sawing and sanding.
 - f. Injurious radiant energy, such as welding, ultraviolet light, lasers and brazing.
 - g. Biohazardous materials.
3. Eye protective devices shall not be used as substitutes for machine guards and other engineered controls.
4. The type of eye protection necessary in a specific workplace or for a specific process shall be in accordance with the nature of the risk. The supervisor shall determine the specific requirements. Approved signs must be posted to indicate where eye protection is required. These can be obtained from Occupational Health and Safety. Supervisors shall enforce this eye protection policy.

Chemical splash goggles with indirect ventilation provide protection against chemical and biological splash hazards and dusts. Always wear splash goggles where there is a risk of splashing chemicals and infectious agents, which represent a significant eye hazard (i.e. corrosives, oxidizing materials and materials with immediate and serious health effects).

Laser Safety Eyewear must be of a type suited to both the power and the wavelength of the laser. The budget unit head or supervisor responsible for the laser shall contact the laser supplier for the recommended protective eyewear.

PROCEDURES

The approved frame for safety glasses must include side shields and meet CSA Standard Z94.3-02 or ANSI Z87.

Non-prescription Protection

Suitable non-prescription safety glasses and splash goggles for all employees, including graduate students, can be obtained from Occupational Health and Safety.

Undergraduate students must purchase their own protective eyewear.

Visitors and other laboratory workers must be supplied with protective eyewear by the budget unit.

The purchase of specialised eye protection devices such as; face shields and laser eye protectors are the responsibility of the individual budget unit.

Prescription Protection

The cost of prescription eyewear is reimbursed by the University for all employees, when specified in the applicable collective agreement for the employee group.

Reimbursements will follow the current Prescription Safety Glasses Reimbursement Procedure, which can be obtained from Occupational Health and Safety.

The individual must arrange his/her own eye examination by a qualified practitioner.

Undergraduate students, who normally wear prescription eyeglasses, must also wear appropriate eye protection.

Contact lenses

Based on existing evidence it is reasonable to allow the use of contact lenses in work environments in conjunction with appropriate protective eyewear in eye hazard areas.

Signs for Designated Areas

Approved signs must be posted to indicate where eye protection is required. These can be obtained from Occupational Health and Safety.

Teaching Laboratories

When **all** experimental work **in the entire lab** has been completed and **all** chemicals **in the entire lab** have been returned to storage, the TA may permit students to remove their eye protection while writing up their experiments.