

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY
PROTECTIVE EYEWEAR POLICY FOR ACADEMIC LABORATORIES¹

Protective eyewear is required in laboratories that use chemicals or etiologic agents, engage in the dissection of animals, have a threat of eye injury from flying debris or the use of lasers becomes imminent. Eye protection must be worn the entire time the person is in these types of laboratories or as long as the potential for eye injury is present. Individuals who supervise these laboratories are responsible for making sure that this policy is enforced. No one should be allowed to work in these laboratories without proper protective eyewear.

The protective eyewear used in these laboratories should be equipped with side shields. They should conform to the American National Standard Institute's (ANSI) standard Z87.1-2003 for use in chemical environments and/or be impact resistant depending on the type of hazard present. In some instances, full face shields may be required if there is the threat of large quantities of debris and/or chemicals splashing onto the face. Protective eyewear must be worn over prescription lenses. Regular prescription lenses do not qualify as eye protection. Individuals working in laboratories engaged in the use of lasers must wear glasses designed to protect against the specific type of laser being used.

Protective eyewear must be worn the entire time the individual is in the laboratory and the threat of eye injury is present. Only in those laboratories in which no apparent eye hazards are present may individuals work without protective eyewear. The decision as to whether or not protective eyewear is needed in a particular laboratory must be made at the departmental level. Laboratory instructors may use their discretion in allowing students to remove their eyewear during the remainder of the laboratory period if potential eye hazards are no longer present in the laboratory. Caution should be used, however, in making this decision. For example, if just one student is working with hazardous chemicals, all students should be wearing protective eyewear.

Students should be informed in the class syllabus that protective eyewear is required in the laboratory. If students are responsible for providing their own protective eyewear, this should be noted in the booklist for the course.

Graduate students and those working on independent research projects should be informed by the instructor if protective eyewear is required.

The wearing of contact lenses in laboratories where volatile fumes may be present is not recommended. Individuals should be informed that many such fumes can cause severe irritation to contact lens wearers. Protective eyewear will not alleviate this problem. Individuals should be instructed to wear their prescription glasses with appropriate eye protection.

Any questions regarding the need for protective eyewear should be directed to the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety.

¹Includes all laboratories in the following areas: Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Allied Health, All Engineering Departments, Geology, Art, Photography, Theater