GuideSheet Eye Protection

All USC employees working in or adjacent to areas that have potential hazardous materials (e.g., toxics, corrosives, biohazards, radioisotopes, lasers, and/or projectiles etc.) are required to use suitable eye and face protection.

Protective eyewear

The following describes levels of eye protection associated with the hazard types.

Safety glasses – Minimal level of protection; molded to face or fitted with side-shields. Some types are designed to fit over eyeglasses.

Safety goggles – Completely seals the eye area and is appropriate for splash hazards e.g., handling corrosive liquids. Some types are designed to fit over eyeglasses.

Face shield – Used in conjunction with goggles /safety glasses to provide extra protection against splashes (e.g., cryogenic liquids and hydrofluoric acid) or projectiles per OSHA and ANSI guidelines.

AVOID using the following eyewear.

Eyeglasses/sunglasses that do not meet ANSI/ISEA Z87.1-2015 are **NOT** approved safety eyewear.

Contact lenses may **NOT** be worn or handled (e.g., removing or putting on contact lenses) where eye hazards exist due to the possibility of them exacerbating eye damage per Cal-OSHA regulations.

Eyeglasses must be worn in lieu of contacts with protective eyewear over the eyeglasses. This rule may not be waived other than by individual medical approval.

The Principal Investigator, Lab Manager, Shop Manager, etc. may give personnel the option of not wearing eye protection in laboratories/workshops **PROVIDED** that personnel are:

What I need to know...

- Select eye protection that is appropriate for the level of hazard.
- Wear tinted eyewear that matches the wavelength of the hazard when using UV, IR, or laser equipment (see Laser Safety Eyewear Fact Sheet).
- DO NOT wear contact lenses in working environments having harmful exposure to materials or light flashes.

- Only manipulating non-hazardous liquids (e.g., water, saline solution) and/or non-hazardous solids (e.g., coarse plastic granules) that are strictly non-injurious to the eye; **AND**
- Not in the vicinity of any equipment, projectile hazards, materials, or other work (e.g., use of glass pipettes) that mandates eye protection; **AND**
- Aware and vigilant of the conditions, operations, and materials that do require eye protection and have eye protection available to use as needed.

A comprehensive lab hazard assessment is needed to determine the above. Use the Lab Hazard Assessment Tool (LHAT) expressly for this purpose. Contact labsafety@usc.edu for more information on the LHAT and eye protection.

Undergraduates normally pay for their own protective eyewear (and other PPE) as an enrollment requirement of instructional laboratory courses. However, eye protection must be made available to undergraduates working in research labs, paid student workers, volunteers, and all other USC personnel that work in hazardous areas.

References

OSHA Eye and Face Protection
https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/eyefaceprotection/index.html

Cal-OSHA Article 10. Personal Safety Devices and Safeguards
http://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/3382.html