

**T**he USC Personal Protective Equipment Standard requires all university personnel who enter or work in laboratories to “wear full-length pants (or clothing that otherwise fully covers the legs and ankles) and closed toe/heel shoes, regardless of whether work with hazardous materials is being performed at the time of entry.”

Safe laboratory footwear in combination with full-length pants (or clothing that fully covers the legs and ankles) and socks protects the skin from potential splash hazards and biohazardous agent/hazardous chemical exposures.



**IDEAL** work shoes for laboratory work are constructed of non-porous material (e.g., leather) and equipped with non-absorbent, slip-resistant soles. Special foot protection (e.g., steel toe protectors) is needed and required in certain areas where hazards include crushing, sharp or pointed objects on floor, or molten metal splashes.



**ACCEPTABLE** footwear that provides protection and is commonly worn in the laboratory work includes fabric-covered shoes (e.g., athletic shoes, sneakers) and perforated leather shoes. These shoes, however, may be susceptible to liquid penetration.



**UNACCEPTABLE** footwear includes: open-toe/heel shoes; sandals and flip flops; ballet shoes; and Crocs™.



Sandals and flip flops expose the skin to potential splash hazards. Ballet shoes do not fully cover the top of the foot even when wearing long pants. Crocs™ have an open heel that is susceptible to splash hazards. Additionally, they have openings that allow liquids to pass through.

## WHAT I NEED TO KNOW...

- Wear non-porous closed-toe, closed-heel shoes with non-slip soles in the laboratory.
- Wear long pants and socks together with safe footwear regardless of whether work with hazardous materials is being performed at the time of entry.
- Contact [labsafety@usc.edu](mailto:labsafety@usc.edu) for information regarding appropriate lab footwear.

High-heels are not recommended for lab use because they are susceptible to tripping hazards and are not ergonomically sound.

## IN THE EVENT OF A HAZARDOUS CHEMICAL SPLASH:

1. Rinse with copious amounts of water from safety eye-wash/shower station.
2. Remove shoes and socks immediately.
3. Notify DPS at (213) 740-4321. Seek medical attention if necessary.
4. Heavily contaminated shoes and socks are considered hazardous laboratory waste. DO NOT attempt to decontaminate or reclaim them.
  - a. Place contaminated articles in a plastic bag, apply an adhesive waste label to the bag, and list contaminants on the label.
  - b. Request a hazardous waste pick-up via [EHSA](#).
  - c. Refer to [Hazardous Waste Disposal Fact Sheet](#) for more information.

## REFERENCES

[USC PPE Standards](#) (university policy for wearing PPE)  
[Lab Manager - Appropriate Footwear in the Lab](#) (web article)  
[Cal-OSHA Personal Safety Devices and Safeguards](#) (California Code of Regulations)

