

Policy

Personal Protective Equipment

NSWHP_PD_015

1. Purpose

To outline the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements for NSW Health Pathology workers in accordance with:

- a) [Work Health & Safety Act \(WHS Act\) 2011](#)
- b) [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017](#)
- c) [Australian Standard 2243 Safety in Laboratories](#) (AS/NZS2243) and
- d) [NSW Health Infection and Prevention Control Policy Directive PD2017_013](#).

NSW Health Pathology uses PPE as a control measure where it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate hazards in the workplace.

2. Background

NSW Health Pathology is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for its workers, students and contractors, so far as is reasonably practicable, by eliminating or controlling hazards in the workplace, using the hierarchy of control.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all NSW Health Pathology workers, students, contractors and any person/s who will be required to work in infectious/hazardous areas.

4. Definitions

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Personal Protective Equipment is anything used or worn by a person to minimise risk to the person's health and safety, including air supplied respiratory equipment.

Worker

A worker is any person carrying out work in any capacity at NSW Health Pathology including work as a worker, contractor or sub-contractor, students, worker of a labour hire company, apprentice or trainee, work integrated learning or work experience student and volunteer.

Person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU)

Under the *WHS Act* the term 'employer' is replaced by 'persons conducting a business or undertaking' (PCBU). A PCBU conducts a business or undertaking alone or with other PCBUs, and is responsible for the primary duty of care for workplace health and safety, as far as is reasonably practicable. A PCBU may be an organisation or an individual. NSW Health Pathology constitutes a PCBU.

Hierarchy of control

The hierarchy of control refers to the ways of controlling risk ranked from the highest level of protection and reliability to the lowest as follows:

Eliminate the hazard

Substitute the hazard with something safer

Isolate the hazard from people

Engineering controls to reduce the risks

Administrative controls to reduce the level of harm

Personal protective equipment to limit the exposure to harm.

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5. Policy Statement

The type of PPE required to be worn in NSW Health Pathology laboratories will depend on the nature of the hazards that may arise in the designated work area.

The PPE to be worn must be determined by undertaking a risk assessment and documented using the [NSW Health Pathology Work Health and Safety Risk Assessment Record](#).

This policy sets out the minimum PPE required to be worn in NSW Health Pathology laboratories in accordance with AS/NZS2243 and PD2017_013.

The minimum PPE requirements are as follows:

5.1 Laboratory Coats, Gowns, Coveralls and Aprons

- a) Long-sleeved, back-opening gowns or coveralls must be used as they provide better protection than laboratory coats.
- b) Aprons must be worn over gowns or laboratory coats, where necessary, to give further protection against spillage of chemicals or biological materials such as blood or culture fluids.
- c) A fluid resistant gown or apron made of impervious material must be worn where there is a likelihood of splashes or contamination with blood or other body.

5.2 Footwear

- a) Closed footwear must be worn, that is, footwear that covers the toes and heels unless lesser requirements can be justified by a risk assessment.

5.3 Eye and Face Protection

- a) Protective eyewear must be worn unless a risk assessment justifies a lesser requirement.
- b) General prescription glasses do not comply with standards.
- c) The choice of equipment to protect the eyes and face from splashes of blood or body substances and impacting objects is dependent on the activity performed.
- d) Protective eyewear labelled single use must not be reused.

5.4 Gloves

- a) Gloves must be worn on both hands and must be used in situations where the worker is potentially exposed to blood and/or body substances.
- b) Gloves must be changed as soon as they are torn or punctured or when the integrity has been altered, before writing in medical notes, answering the telephone, using the computer and moving or touching equipment.
- c) Hand hygiene must be performed immediately after removing gloves to avoid transfer of microorganisms to other persons or environments.
- d) Disposable gloves must never be reused.

5.5 Local PPE Requirements

Additional and/or special PPE requirements may apply in specific NSW Health Pathology laboratories.

In those instances, staff are required to comply with local PPE requirements in addition to the minimum PPE requirements set out in this policy.

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5.6 Exemptions

A claim for exemption from wearing required PPE must be supported by a medical certificate.

Managers may seek advice from an independent specialist and/or consult with NSW Health Pathology Recovery at Work Coordinators before approving the exemption.

5.7 Non-Compliance

Failure to wear the required PPE may constitute a breach of legal, regulatory and policy requirements.

Breaches may result in disciplinary action being taken in accordance with the [NSW Health Code of Conduct PD 2015_049](#).

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Managers

It is the responsibility of managers to:

- a) Provide information, training and instruction of PPE requirements including upon commencement with NSW Health Pathology through the induction process
- b) Document what constitutes adequate PPE through the completion of a risk assessment or development of a safe work practice
- c) Supply workers with appropriate PPE relevant to the duties performed
- d) Ensure that workers, students, contractors and visitors wear appropriate PPE when visiting or working in infectious or hazardous areas
- e) Periodically review exceptions in accordance with medical certificates in consultation with the worker and the Recovery at Work Coordinator.
- f) Comply with all relevant NSW Health and NSW Health Pathology policy documents.

6.2 Workers

It is the responsibility of workers to:

- a) Take reasonable care of his or her own health and safety
- b) Document what constitutes adequate PPE through the completion of a risk assessment or development of a safe work practice
- c) Wear PPE suitable for the type of work being performed
- d) Ensure that PPE fits correctly, is not modified or tampered with and is worn in accordance with the manufacturer's instruction and training
- e) Be responsible for the maintenance of PPE provided
- f) Report faulty or damaged PPE to the manager
- g) Provide a medical certificate to the manager if seeking exemption from wearing PPE
- h) Comply with all relevant NSW Health and NSW Health Pathology policy documents.

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7. Legal and Policy Framework

[Australian Standard AS/NZS 2243 Safety in Laboratories](#)

[NSW Health Code of Conduct PD 2015_049](#)

[NSW Health Infection and Prevention Control Policy Directive PD2017_013](#)

[NSW Health Pathology Risk Assessment Template NSWHP_F_011](#)

[Work Health & Safety Act 2011](#)

[Work Health & Safety Regulation 2017](#)

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed by 30/04/2020.

9. Risk

Risk Statement	If an injury or acquired disease occurs due to staff not wearing appropriate personal protective equipment this could result in SafeWork prosecution and workers compensation claims.
Risk Category	Work Health & Safety

10. Further Information

For further information, please contact:

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11. Version History

The approval and amendment history for this document must be listed in the following table.

Version No	Effective Date	Approved By	Approval Date	Policy Author	Risk Rating	Sections Modified
V1.0	11/04/2018	Transformation Governance Committee	04/04/2018	Daniel Trazzera	High	New Policy
V2.0	07/04/2018	Chair, Transformation Governance Committee	18/06/2018	Daniel Trazzera	High	Minor amendment to refer to WHS Risk Assessment Tool and to add section 5.5.