

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 (<i>PPE</i>) is anything a worker uses or wears to keep them healthy and safe..
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 <i>WHS Act</i> 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: <i>Eliminate</i> the hazard <i>Substitute</i> the hazard with something safer <i>Isolate</i> the hazard from people <i>Engineering controls</i> to reduce the risks <i>Administrative controls</i> to reduce the level of harm <i>Personal protective equipment</i> to limit the exposure to harm.

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 fluids 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 hazardous 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.
- d) Disposable gloves must never be reused.

5.5 Special PPE Requirements

Additional and/or special PPE requirements may apply in specific circumstances as advised by Local Health District, Public Health Orders or Ministry of Health. In those instances, staff are required to comply.

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5.6 Exemptions

A claim for exemption from wearing required PPE must be supported by a medical certificate and approved by NSW Health Pathology.

Managers are to undertake a risk assessment and seek advice from Manager, Safety and Wellbeing before approving the exemption.

5.7 Non-Compliance

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 hazardous areas and per local requirements
- e) Periodically review exceptions in accordance with medical certificates in consultation with the worker and Manager Safety and Wellbeing
- 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 as well as others
- b) Workers to participate in Risk Assessments and Safe Work Procedures when required
- c) Wear PPE suitable for the duties 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 documents.

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 30/06/2026

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	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	04/07/2018	Chair, Transformation Governance Committee	18/06/2018	Daniel Trazzera	High	Minor amendment to refer to WHS Risk Assessment Tool
V3.0	08/08/2023	Director, People and Culture	08/08/2023	Manager, Health Safety and Wellbeing	High	Section 5.5 - Local and/or Special PPE requirements