

LAB COAT SELECTION GUIDE

The Rationale for the Selection, Use and Management of Lab Coats in a Biological/Microbiology Setting

Selection Criteria

- ✓ Designed with the work practice in mind.
- ✓ Comfortable, breathable (remember you could be spending hours managing your tissue cultures).
- ✓ Cuffed sleeves prevent the cuff from becoming contaminated or contaminating your samples
- ✓ Sized appropriately, this may mean having a fitted style.
- ✓ Specific coloured lab coats easily identify those which are dedicated for use with cells, pathogens, etc.
- ✓ Coat design is important (longer lab coats provide greater protection).
- ✓ Closures (snaps allow quick removal).
- ✓ Pockets (no slit access to undergarment permitted, pockets are not the best options).

Identifying

- ✓ Denote which lab coat is to be restricted for use with biological samples (colour or text, for example).
- ✓ If lab coat is assigned to a specific individual it should be marked accordingly.

Use

- ✓ Lab coats work only if they are worn.
- ✓ Lab coats must be snapped close.
- ✓ Replace when worn such as to undermine integrity, snaps no longer closed, soiled so cleaning is ineffective.

Storage

- ✓ Hung up in a dedicated area at the entry/exit of the work zone.
- ✓ Must hang free and not be overlapping other garments/lab coats.

Cleaning

- ✓ Lab coats must regularly be cleaned after possible exposure to pathogens or biological contaminants, or at a minimum interval of once per month.
- ✓ If working with pathogens they must be laundered by a service who has this capacity or by autoclaving first.

Lab coats, protect your science from you & you from your science!

The human body sheds

- 30,000 to 40,000 cells per hour,
 - 1 million cells per 24 hours.
- Street clothes are porous and easily shed those cells into your research samples!



Additional information is available from the Office of the Chief Risk Officer, PPE Guide