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