

The USC Personal Protective Equipment Standard requires all university personnel who enter or work in laboratories and other areas that contain hazardous materials to “wear full-length pants... 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 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 in concert with safe footwear regardless of whether work with hazardous materials is being performed at the time of entry.
- Contact 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:

- Remove shoes and socks immediately.
- Rinse with copious amounts of water from safety eyewash/shower station.
- Notify DPS at (213) 740-4321. Seek medical attention if necessary.
- Heavily contaminated shoes and socks are considered hazardous laboratory waste. Do NOT attempt to decontaminate/reclaim.
 - ◇ Place contaminated articles in a plastic bag and label. List contaminants on label.
 - ◇ Request a [hazardous waste pick-up online](#).
 - ◇ 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)