

**L**ab coats offer protection from a wide range of hazards in both instructional and research laboratories. During the semester, lab coats will inevitably become soiled/contaminated with dirt, chemicals, and/or biological materials. It is important, therefore, to launder the lab coats periodically to avoid unnecessary exposures.

Wash lab coats at least once a semester through a commercial laundering service that normally handles garments of this nature (e.g., auto shop uniforms). If you choose to launder your lab coat at home, then follow the guidelines below.



Load the washing machine with just the lab coat and set the cycle to **HOT Wash/ Cold Rinse**. Adjust settings to a longer wash time and add an extra Rinse Cycle.



Add detergent levels recommended by the manufacturer. With concentrated detergents, exceeding the recommended level may impact the washing machine's performance and may damage it.



Once the washing machine has completed its cycle and stops, remove the lab coat and place on a hanger to air dry.



**IMPORTANT:** Decontaminate the empty washing machine with a quick wash or rinse cycle before using it again for normal laundering.



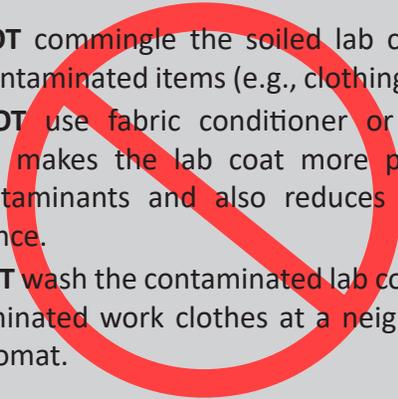
**STOP**

If the lab coat is heavily soiled, contaminated, or damaged, then return to either the instructional lab host department or research lab to be treated as hazardous waste.

### What I need to know...

- Launder lab coat at least once a semester.
- Wash lab coat separately from other clothing.
- Do not use fabric softeners.
- Replace lab coat when it is damaged or heavily soiled/contaminated.

### REMEMBER...

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- **DO NOT** commingle the soiled lab coats with non-contaminated items (e.g., clothing, towels).
  - **DO NOT** use fabric conditioner or softener, as this makes the lab coat more permeable to contaminants and also reduces its flame resistance.
  - **DO NOT** wash the contaminated lab coat and/or contaminated work clothes at a neighborhood laundromat.

EH&S recommends that students keep their lab coats and writing utensils in a zippered plastic bag to limit cross-contamination. Protective eyewear may be included as well, but first place in a separate plastic bag.

EH&S also recommends that students keep a set of work clothes (e.g., long pants, long-sleeve shirt, and closed-toe shoes or work boots) in a zippered plastic bag to be worn when working in instructional or research labs.

### Additional Information

USC PPE Standards <https://ehs.usc.edu/research/manage/ppe/>  
PPE Fact Sheet: Lab Coat Selection <http://tiny.cc/labCoat-select>