

COVID-19 GLOVE USAGE GUIDANCE

Objectives:

Resume some level of on-campus work activities and in-lab research activities while minimizing exposure and spread of SARS-CoV-2 as it is endemic in the community.

According to the Center for Disease Control:

For the general public, wearing gloves is recommended ONLY when you are cleaning or caring for someone who is sick. In most other situations, such as running errands, wearing gloves is not necessary. Instead, individuals should practice everyday preventive actions:

- Keeping physical distance (at least 6 feet) from others,
- Washing your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, and
- Wearing a cloth face covering when you have to go out in public.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/gloves.html>

General principles:

Each supervisor, faculty member or laboratory leader at Caltech will develop a written plan for their unit or laboratory. Guidelines and recommendations have been issued to ensure risk control measures and practices are understood and implemented appropriately. These risk control measures include:

- Not coming to campus when sick
- Practicing physical distancing
- Wearing a face covering
- Practicing frequent hand hygiene
- Frequently sanitizing workspace surfaces, offices and/or laboratories

As disposable gloves indisputably constitute a physical barrier between an individual's hands and touched surfaces, one should consider the following:

- Wearing gloves for extended periods causes moisture to build up and harbor within, and increases the risk of skin damage, potentially leading to skin infections.
- The risk of hand contamination while removing gloves while handling hazardous material is greatly increased when people are not appropriately trained in the specific steps of gloves removal.
- The likelihood of skipping or forgetting to perform proper hand-washing increases when one is wearing gloves.

Thus, the risk introduced by wearing gloves outweigh the benefits of implementing this practice as a common COVID-19 control measure.

Use of disposable gloves in non-laboratory areas:

Consequently, in non-lab areas, EHS recommends wearing gloves ONLY when handling cleaning and disinfecting agents that could damage the skin upon prolonged exposure. Thorough hand washing must be performed after removing the gloves. Wearing gloves "at all-times" is NOT recommended in non-laboratory areas.

Laboratory Attire and Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE)

Based on the same principles, and because it could increase the risk of spreading hazardous research material in the laboratory, wearing gloves “at all-times” is NOT recommended in a laboratory setting.

- Under COVID-19 precautions, standard laboratory attire should consist of long pants, closed toe-shoes, and a cloth face covering.
- Upon the risk assessment for working with hazardous materials, biologicals, chemicals, radiological substances or lasers, additional adequate PPE must be used. Hazard specific PPE can consist of lab coats, gowns, safety glasses, face masks, or disposable gloves. This additional PPE can be used alone or in combination.
- Laboratory personnel using PPE must be trained on the type of PPE required for specific hazardous tasks and must be training on proper donning and doffing techniques.
https://www.safety.caltech.edu/documents/479-biosafety_manual_2018_.pdf