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Date: March 2020

From: Ruth LeBlanc, Director of Environmental Health and Safety

Subject: The Use of Personal Protective Equipment at Sonoma State University

Although the University environment is often considered a casual working environment, there is a minimum level of daily attire that is appropriate for many areas at the University. This level of clothing is not to be confused with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), which is outlined below.

While PPE requirements are often outlined in Safety Data Sheets (SDS's), daily attire is not typically addressed. However, OSHA does require that employers provide a safe working environment for their employees. California OSHA addresses this in a general manner in the General Industry Safety Orders in Section 3383(b), which in part states, "Clothing appropriate for the work being done shall be worn." The publication *Prudent Practices in the Laboratory* produced by the National Research Council, has become an industry standard, is incorporated in the University's Chemical Hygiene Plan, and is widely recognized by OSHA as detailing acceptable practices. Appropriate daily wear is detailed in *Prudent Practices in the Laboratory* as:

- Clothing that fully covers the body.
- Shoes that cover the entire foot, provide a stable platform, and have rubber or similar slip resistant soles.
- Socks that cover the ankle.
- Lab coats (considered PPE).

The manager or supervisor who oversees the area should review daily attire for science lab areas (any areas where lab type work is being performed or chemicals are being stored) for appropriateness to ensure that increased levels of clothing or PPE are not required. For instance, when working with pyrophoric chemicals, lab coats and other clothing should be made of flame-resistant materials. Employees who are not dressed in appropriate daily wear shall not be permitted to work in lab environments.

Personal Protective Equipment is equipment or clothing that the employees would not typically wear when they leave the work area, and would include items like lab coats, eyeglasses, face shields, aprons, and like equipment. Proper selection of PPE requires a hazard evaluation be completed, employees (including student employees) be trained on proper wear and care of PPE, and that the employer provide PPE at no cost to the employees.