

# LAB COAT POLICY

## Safety and lab coats outside the laboratory:

forwarded from the Joint AHL/Pathobiology Safety Committee

The safety committee does not make rules but it provides advisories to enhance and monitor the safety of the departmental community. As with all safety related issues, *common sense should prevail*. As members of the University community, we are responsible for our own safety and for the safety of those around us. Each of us should admonish anyone acting in a potentially unsafe manner. The most universal of protective clothing we use is the laboratory coat. It is worn to protect us from accidental exposure to potentially harmful substances or agents.

We should aim to minimize exposure of other workers to these same harmful agents. As a general principle, then, it is prudent not to wear contaminated or potentially contaminated clothing (including protective clothing) *outside* the laboratory. We cannot see many of the contaminants, so we cannot be sure that a laboratory coat being worn outside the laboratory is contaminated or not. The safest policy then is to suggest that protective clothing only be worn in the laboratory. This makes changing out of protective clothing when leaving a laboratory a habit.

Our laboratories and rooms are scattered over a large area, and materials have to be transported from one side to another along corridors, so some exceptions are necessary. We do not regard 'providing protection from the cold' as a reason for an exception.

## RECOMMENDATION:

The Safety Committee recommends that protective clothing such as laboratory coats and gloves only be worn inside the laboratory unless it is necessary for safety-related personal protection. Anyone wearing a laboratory coat outside a laboratory should expect to be questioned by other members of our community.

## LAB COAT LAUNDERING (Lab coats don't go home!!)

- Labcoats should be autoclaved if contaminated with pathogens.
- Laundry service is provided through a central service located in Room 2134, Building 49, first alcove.
- Identify your labcoat with permanent marking and place in laundry bag. Laundry pick-up is every Tuesday: Clean lab coats will be returned to this room at this time.