Policy on Eye Protection
Eye Protection

Introduction

It is the duty of both employer and employee to take measures, so far as is reasonably practicable, to eliminate or minimise risk. This policy, together with its associated guidance, sets the standards required by the MRC to minimise risk of injury to the eyes.

Policy

The MRC will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the effective protection of the eyes of its entire staff while at work and all those that work under its management and supervision.

Appropriate eye protection must be worn in all laboratories, workshops and science support areas (see examples below) by employees, students, contractors and visitors to MRC premises. Where the use of eye protection is required then the blue mandatory safety signs must be displayed and approved eye protection available to visitors to the area.

Staff and students will be provided with personal eye protection and where appropriate, prescription safety spectacles free of charge. The eye protection may be in the form of spectacles, goggles or visors as appropriate for the activity and area.

The only exception to this requirement to wear protection in designated areas will be where a risk assessment has been undertaken and published for an activity where it is considered reasonable not to wear protection. It is accepted that there may be a limited number of specific tasks undertaken within laboratories, e.g. microscopy, where the risk assessment and procedure may preclude the use of eye protection. In such cases the activity must be separated from any other work that may cause injury to the eye.

No area can be designated as not requiring eye protection unless all risk assessments covering activities in that area reach that evaluated conclusion.

Areas and activities where eye protection is mandatory

Areas where eye protection is mandatory, this list is not exhaustive as local risk assessments may include other areas and/or activities:

(a) Workshops during
   - work with powered tools
   - processes involving hot metal or compressed gases
   - glass blowing;

(b) Laboratories during
   - work with hazardous substances that could cause eye injury
   - assembly of experimental equipment and when connecting gas under pressure
   - when modifying or working with glass apparatus;
(c) **All** biological containment laboratories, or other ‘wet’ biological laboratories, where
- infectious material or hazardous substances are present
- dissections may be undertaken
- animals may be inoculated with hazardous micro-organisms, including genetically modified micro-organisms;

(d) Biological support rooms, e.g. autoclave facilities or media preparation room where staff may sustain eye injury during the handling of both clean and contaminated loads;

(e) Controlled laser areas when there is potential for exposure to a laser beam that could result in harm;

(f) Other high risk areas where the risk assessments have determined that blue mandatory safety signs must be posted.

The blue mandatory eye protection signs must be displayed at the entry to these areas.

**Summary of action**

Directors are required to ensure the following:

(a) All risk assessments made for the workplace, procedures and individual substances must be reviewed in the light of this policy and that appropriate eye protection is provided for all users and visitors to working laboratories in which MRC staff work.

(b) The eye protection provided is suitable for the wearer, and compatible with any other personal protective equipment that is required.

(c) The eye protection is maintained in good condition. Suitable checks should be made and recorded and provision made to store it in a clean and protected location.

(d) Managers, as part of their ongoing supervision and routine monitoring of work activities, must ensure that eye protection is used. Where individuals are observed not to comply then appropriate corrective action must be taken.

(e) Where individual members of staff require sight correcting safety spectacles they are provided free of charge.

**Guidance and useful links**

The following is available to assist in the implementation of this policy:

1. Eye protection: a Guide to Provision and Use (Booklet)