

CHEM -SOP- 07	Revision #: 01	Implementation Date: July-2020	Last Reviewed/ Update: July-7 th -2020	Page #: 1 of 5
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PROPER USE OF NON-MEDICAL FLAME-RESISTANT FACE MASKS

The Department of Chemistry has secured the provision of reusable **flame-resistant** cloth face masks for St. George patrons working with flammable materials in research laboratories on-site at Lash Miller. These masks are made from Westex UltraSoft® Flame-Resistant fabric and will be made available through Chem Stores. The use of cloth face masks (non-medical) provides partial protection for the user and significantly protects the people in front of the user by acting as a barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from spreading.

Flame-resistant cloth face masks are encouraged to be worn whenever 2 meters of interpersonal separation cannot be maintained when working with flammable materials.

Do not wear face masks at all times in non-public areas where physical distancing can be maintained, since face masks become ineffective once they become damp.

IMPORTANT:

- Please note that these masks are non-medical masks. **Non-medical face masks must not be used instead of medical-grade masks** (e.g. N95 or surgical masks) where required by EHS to either conduct research or where physical distancing measures are not possible.
- If you require an air-purifying respirator, you must be fit tested with the specific make, model, style, and size of respirator you will be using. [Contact EHS to book an appointment.](#)

1. Purpose: to provide step by step guidance on how to wear and maintain reusable flame-resistant cloth face masks when handling and using flammable materials to help prevent the community spread and risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2.

2. Scope: applies to all faculty, staff and students within the Department of Chemistry who are working on-site with flammable materials in situations where physical distancing cannot be achieved (for example, when training new students).

3. Prerequisites: understanding of physical distancing and COVID-19 transmission prevention guidance and best practices, as provided by Health Canada, Public Health Ontario, and Toronto Public Health. WHMIS training as provided by UofT's Office of Environmental Health and Safety.

4. Responsibilities: It is the responsibility of Principal Investigators and Managers to facilitate the implementation of this SOP and lab personnel are responsible to comply. Everybody plays an important role in reducing the community spread of COVID-19 and risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2.

5.

Personal Protective Equipment

The following shall be worn when physical distancing cannot be maintained during the handling and use of flammable materials

Flame-Resistant Face Mask



Flame-Resistant Lab Coat



6. Procedure

NOTE: Supervisors can solicit a risk assessment from EHS before deciding to implement the use of non-medical flame-resistant cloth face masks.

1. Reusable flame-resistant cloth face masks will be made available through Chem Stores:
 - i. The face mask is a unisex one-size-fits-all design with adjustable ties to customize the fit.
 - ii. The face mask should be laundered before use. Laundering instructions can be found below on Page 4. **It is IMPORTANT to follow these instructions to avoid losing the flame-resistant coat of the fabric.**
 - iii. Pls and Managers are encouraged to provide multiple face masks for personnel to have available during cleaning/laundry. Damaged or loss masks should be replaced immediately.
2. Flame-resistant face masks should be worn when handling and using flammable materials and physical distancing (separation of 2 meters) cannot be maintained. Situations that may involve personnel working closer than 2 meters and requiring the use of these flame-resistant face masks include the training of lab personnel on standard operating procedures, or the dispensing of flammable materials.
3. **Non-flame-resistant face masks should never be worn when working with flammable materials.**
4. When donning the flame-resistant face mask, it should:
 - i. Allow for easy breathing.
 - ii. Fit securely to the head with the provided ties.
 - iii. Be changed as soon as possible if damp or dirty.
 - iv. Be comfortable and not require frequent adjustment.
 - v. Be large enough to completely and comfortably cover the nose and mouth without gaping.
5. The flame-resistant face mask should not:
 - i. Be shared with others.
 - ii. Impair the vision or interfere with tasks.
 - iii. Be secured with tape or other inappropriate materials.
 - iv. Be placed on anyone unable to remove them without assistance or anyone who has trouble breathing.

How to Don the Flame-Resistant Cloth Face Mask:

1. Ensure the face mask is clean and dry.
2. Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before touching the mask.
 - If unavailable, use hand sanitizer with a minimum 60% alcohol base.
3. Ensure your hair is away from your face.
4. Place the face mask over your nose and mouth, and secure to your head with its ties.
 - Adjust if needed to ensure nose and mouth are fully covered.

- The mask should fit snugly to the cheeks and there should not be any gaps.
5. Repeat Step 2.

While wearing a non-medical face mask, it is important to avoid touching your face. If you do touch your mask or face, you should immediately wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds. You can also use hand sanitizer with a minimum 60% alcohol base.

How to Doff the Flame-Resistant Cloth Face Mask:

1. Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before touching the mask.
 - If unavailable, use hand sanitizer with a minimum 60% alcohol base.
2. Remove the face mask by un-tying it.
 - Avoid touching the front of the mask when removing it.
 - The mask can be placed in a plastic bag temporarily if you are not at home.
 - Make sure you close or zip seal the bag while storing it.
3. After removing the face mask, repeat Step 1.

Cleaning of Flame-Resistant Cloth Face Mask:

Change your flame-resistant face mask as soon as it becomes damp or soiled. If you plan to re-use your face mask, wash it before wearing it again, by following the instructions below:

1. Machine wash the mask inside-out in warm water up to 165°F (74°C) and with one of the acceptable consumer detergents:
 - i. All
 - ii. Arm & Hammer
 - iii. Cheer
 - iv. Era
 - v. Gain
 - vi. Purex (powder and tablets)
 - vii. Select Ultra
 - viii. Surf
 - ix. Tide, Tide w/ Bleach Alternative (powder, liquid & tablets)
 - x. Wisk
 - xi. Xtra

Avoid the use of softeners, starch, chlorine bleach, hydrogen peroxide bleach, and soaps (salts of fatty acids).

2. Once washed, hang dry the mask inside-out. **DO NOT PLACE IT IN THE DRIER. DO NOT IRON.**
3. The Westex UltraSoft® Flame-Resistant fabric can retain its flame resistance after 100 washings, while shrinking less than 7%.² After 100 washes, it is recommended to purchase a new flame-resistant face mask.

References:

1. Government of Canada. (2020). Non-Medical Masks and Face Coverings: About. Retrieved 06/22/2020 from <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks/about-non-medical-masks-face-coverings.html>
2. Westex. (2020) Westex UltraSoft®. Retrieved 06/22/2020 from <https://www.westex.com/fr-fabric-brands/ultrasoft/>