This policy statement defines suggested best practices at MIT for use of gloves, face coverings, and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) during the time of COVID-19. The policy was developed by the PPE Committee in coordination with MIT Medical and the Environment, Health and Safety Office (EHS) and the Research Ramp-Up Committee.

ON-CAMPUS

- Face coverings, such as cloth coverings, are required on campus, and in common areas and public spaces, per order of the City of Cambridge. You must wear a face covering in:
  - lobbies, hallways
  - stairwells, elevators
  - sidewalks, streets
  - bus stops
  - parking lots, garages
  - and anytime around other people.

- Cloth face coverings or face masks must be worn at all times while in campus buildings (including in elevators, shared offices, and restrooms).

Exceptions include:
  - anyone with a disability or medical condition for whom wearing a mask is not recommended by their healthcare professional
  - anyone who has trouble breathing
  - when consuming food or drink
  - when doing so may introduce a safety hazard to workers
  - when you are alone in a private office or personal space with a closed door

- Face coverings and face masks are available from MIT for free as needed, it is acceptable to provide your own. Use proper technique for putting on and taking off a face covering or face mask.

- Supplies of face coverings and face masks are available in the Lobby of Building 7, at certain research building access checkpoints, and DLCs.

- Cloth face coverings should be washed and kept for reuse.

IN LABORATORIES

- Cloth face coverings or face masks must be worn at all times while in labs.

Exceptions include:
  - anyone with a disability or medical condition for whom wearing a mask is not recommended by their healthcare professional
  - anyone who has trouble breathing
  - when doing so poses a greater mental or physical health, safety, or security risk
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- It is acceptable to wear the same cloth face covering that you arrived with into the lab, and acceptable to leave the lab with the same cloth face covering, provided it is not contaminated with hazardous materials or has become torn.

- Experiments that did not require a surgical mask or N95 respirator prior to the COVID-19 pandemic do not require these protective devices now; a cloth face covering is sufficient.

- It is acceptable to continue to use surgical or N-95 masks if such masks are used under normal conditions for protection during the normal course of research activities, for example, where a surgical mask is intended to protect the wearer from splashes of potentially contaminated biological fluids. Surgical masks should be used in lieu of cloth face coverings during work in BL2+ containment.

- If there was no risk of exposure to hazardous materials when the experiments were performed without any face covering, there is no additional risk of contaminating the cloth covering from the same experiments now.

- The highest risk of contamination would be from touching the cloth face covering with contaminated gloves. In the event your mask becomes contaminated, please replace your mask. In some cases, a face shield could be used to protect the cloth mask.

- The use of engineering controls, (i.e. fume hood or biosafety cabinet) would also protect the user and cloth face covering from possible contamination.

- Use of cloth face coverings and face masks should be carefully reviewed by lab managers and EHS in cases where flames or heat sources are used or when covering straps could be caught in equipment. Some experiments involving flammable and pyrophoric chemicals may require a flame-resistant face covering as determined through a risk assessment with the PI or DLC. Please contact the EHS Office (environment@mit.edu) to assist in making this determination.

- There is no change in guidance on wearing gloves. Gloves should continue to be worn to protect oneself from hazardous materials. Gloves should not be worn outside the lab.

- There is no change in guidance for gowns or lab coats.

- Shared PPE (e.g. lab coats, safety glasses, face shields, cryogenic gloves) should be avoided and PPE items should be dedicated to one user only. If sharing PPE cannot be avoided, decontaminate the PPE before and after each use. Please contact the EHS Office (environment@mit.edu) if you have questions about PPE decontamination.