Minimum PPE for Chemical Laboratory Workers

Appropriate dress, both in terms of body coverage and textile choices, is extremely important to laboratory safety. Complete coverage (no exposed skin) from the upper chest down to the toes is the best way to keep accidental skin exposures to a minimum. This requires long pants and closed toed shoes, with socks; all of materials that do not melt in a fire (cotton & wool are good examples). A well--fitted lab coat (Sleeves need to be the right length and not so oversized that loose material knocks objects over) completes the clothing, and it too must be composed of such material. The closed toed shoes do not have to be crush resistant, unless the normal tasks performed in the laboratory demand it. If heavy objects are frequently lifted and moved in the normal operation of a laboratory, then such shoes/boots are required (see shoe/boot SOP).

Well fitting safety glasses (with side shields) are the minimum level of eye protection permitted in a laboratory. These are augmented with splash goggles or face shields as appropriate for ongoing laboratory operations (see appropriate SOP on when each is a required).

What kind, thickness, and length of gloves worn need to be discussed in its SOP. Importantly, one should not wear gloves outside of research labs; contamination of common area (doorknobs, handles, doorjambs) may result, causing injury to other workers.

Long hair should be restrained well enough that it does not interfere with normal work processes.