

## **Spotlight on Safety**

### **Protective Eyewear - The Eyes Have It!**

Serious eye injuries in the human A&P laboratory may occur from splashes of chemicals, vapors from preservatives, spray from wetting solutions, contamination with body fluids, or impact from bone chips. To protect the eyes from these hazards, a variety of safety eyewear is available: glasses, goggles, and face shields.

*Safety glasses* look like prescription eyeglasses but have sturdier frames and impact resistant lenses. Safety glasses are not sufficient to provide protection from major chemical splashes because they do not fit tightly against the face. Side shields can be added to safety glasses to improve protection.

Unlike safety glasses, *goggles* fit tightly against the face providing better protection from flying particles and chemical splashes. Ventilated goggles prevent fogging by allowing air to circulate and safety goggles can have either direct or indirect ventilation. Direct ventilation will stop the entry of large particles into the eye but goggles with indirect ventilation are constructed to prohibit hazardous materials from draining directly into the eye and are the better choice.

*Face shields* are commonly used to guard against splashes of body fluids or chemical spray and should be large enough to protect the ears, neck, and face. Face shields alone are not enough to defend against powerful impact from flying particles or large volumes of hazardous liquids and under these conditions, face shields should be worn with either safety glasses or goggles. If the primary danger is chemical splash, use goggles and a face shield. If there is danger of impact from flying particles, safety glasses should be worn under the face shield.

It is permissible to wear contact lenses in the laboratory but they do not offer any protection against chemical splashes and safety eyewear must be worn over them. If a contact lens becomes contaminated with hazardous chemicals, the eye should be rinsed at an eyewash station and the contact lens removed immediately and discarded.