

The University of Scranton

Workplace Safety Committee

Issue: The use of latex-based items (e.g. balloons, gloves) have been identified on campus, as well as reports of allergic reactions to these items. The Workplace Safety Committee recommends the implementation of various awareness-based initiatives.

Recommendations:

The University of Scranton's Workplace Safety Committee recommends that students, staff, faculty and visitors choose non-latex alternatives when bringing certain materials on campus, including balloons and other displays.

- Departments are encouraged to use alternatives when ordering certain products, such as gloves and balloons.
- Periodic reminders are sent to students, staff, visitors and local suppliers recommending the use of non-latex balloons during graduation or other ceremonies.
- Individuals are encouraged to inform their supervisors or faculty of any latex allergies or sensitivities. The University will work with the individual to provide latex-safe alternatives.
- Facilities personnel are instructed to review areas for targeted products, such as gloves.

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- **LATEX:** Latex refers to natural rubber latex and includes products made from dry natural rubber. Natural rubber latex is the product manufactured from a milky fluid derived mainly from a rubber tree.
 - **SOURCES:** The most common sources of a latex allergen on campus are balloons and latex gloves. Other products that contain latex include, but are not limited to: goggles; sports equipment; medical and dental products (syringes, iv tubing, electrode pads); respirators. Latex paint does not use the natural rubber latex and typically does not illicit allergic responses to sensitized individuals.
 - **NON-LATEX ALTERNATIVES:** Alternatives to latex products that The University encourages affected Departments and visitors to use include latex-free gloves (Nitrile, vinyl) and Mylar, plastic or vinyl balloons.
 - **SYMPTOMS OF EXPOSURE:** The symptoms of latex allergy can differ depending on the type of exposure and the severity of the allergy. Symptoms of allergic responses range from skin, eye or nasal irritation; hives; difficulty breathing and shortness of breath; wheezing; coughing; or, unexplained shock.
 - The responsibility of understanding the risks associated with latex, even when reasonable precautions have been made, rests with the student, staff member or visitor. The University encourages individuals to inform their supervisors or faculty of any latex allergies or sensitivities. The University will work with the individual to provide latex-safe alternatives.