

Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

Updated Guidelines for Conducting Research in CBC During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Updated 2021-02-18

Students, faculty and staff have done a commendable job in persevering with their studies and the university's mission under trying conditions. While broad vaccination is on the horizon, it is essential that we continue to implement best practices to ensure that we can continue with our research and studies. To that end, this document updates departmental requirements based on updated standards, and clarifies best practices to facilitate adherence to safety protocols.

These guidelines apply to all laboratory personnel (postdoctoral researchers, students, faculty, staff, and any authorized visitors such as service technicians), regardless of vaccination status or past COVID-19 illness.

1. Daily Health Check. A daily health check to report body temperature and health status through the Ohio State mobile app or compass.osu.edu is required for all students, faculty and staff each day they come to campus.
2. Flexible work accommodations. The department supports maximum flexibility to help our faculty, staff and student employees balance the demands of work and home life during this COVID-19 pandemic. To minimize the spread of illness, remote work options are supported whenever feasible. <https://hr.osu.edu/coronavirus/working/>
3. Wear a mask. Wearing a mask is the most effective means of halting the spread of COVID-19. Face masks must be worn properly (over nose, mouth and chin) everywhere on campus. The university has compiled [guidance on how to respectfully encourage compliance with face mask guidelines on campus](#). Exceptions include (1) when in a private office with the door closed; (2) for momentary (< 30 sec) breaks to change or adjust a mask, drink a beverage, or consume a snack, while spaced a minimum of 6 feet apart; (3) when dining in a suitable space; (4) when washing one's face in a public bathroom; or (5) when a prohibitive medical condition exists. The time duration for non-mask usage should always be as short as possible. Disposable surgical or N95 masks are required in laboratory spaces; reusable masks are permissible in all other spaces. Face shields may be used in addition to disposable surgical or N95 masks, but everyone must wear a mask.
4. Personal Safety Practices. Everyone is expected to follow the [safe and healthy personal safety practices](#), including face masks, physical distancing and hand hygiene. High-touch surfaces (door handles, benches, hoods, desks, keyboards, equipment) should be cleaned with a suitable disinfectant (e.g., 70% ethanol or 10% bleach, and soap, as needed) before and after use.
5. Lab density. To comply with social distancing guidelines, personnel must schedule laboratory and office access times. Simultaneously-used work spaces must allow researchers to remain a minimum of 6 feet apart.

6. Use of shared spaces. Online sign-up and logs are required for all common research areas and equipment rooms. Coordinate with adjacent groups or personnel, as needed, in order to minimize cross-contamination.
7. Limiting on-site time. To facilitate social distancing requirements, and to allow other laboratory members access to the lab, personnel should limit time in the laboratory to that required for experimental work.
8. Exchanges of samples or other materials: When possible, exchanges should avoid unnecessary social contact, preserving a 6-foot or greater separation, and disinfected upon receipt.
9. Training and collaborative activities: Video conferencing is encouraged, including use of a webcam to demonstrate techniques where possible. For in-person training, the trainee and trainee should strive to remain at least 6 feet apart when possible; training periods within a 6-foot distance should be as short as possible and may not extend beyond 15 minutes within a two-hour period. Disposable surgical or N95 masks must be worn at all times (i.e., no drinking or eating) while within a 6 ft distance.
10. Reporting unsafe conditions: If unsafe behavior is observed, the following sequence of actions is recommended to address it, escalating only if the problem is not addressed: (1) respectfully ask the person to self-correct; (2) alert the PI/Director; (3) inform the local Building Coordinator; (4) alert Department Chair. For BI, BRT and RF, the building coordinator is Carol Barnes (.829). For all other CBC buildings, the building coordinators are Walter Williams (.5141) and Kevin Dill (.3). An [anonymous reporting form](#) is also available if the steps above cannot be reasonably taken.
11. Corrective actions: Disregard for these policies will not be tolerated. Researchers that refuse to abide by safety guidelines will be denied access to research laboratories and other shared spaces. Safety violations will be warned only once and expected to follow the guidelines. The seriousness of the potential health risks to others requires that the second offense by the same individual will result in immediate action.

Resources:

- <https://chemistry.osu.edu/inresources/safety/chem/return-work>
- <https://safeandhealthy.osu.edu/>
- [Online health training slideshow](#)
- [OSU Transition Task Force and Updates](#)
- [OSU Research Recovery Plan](#)
- [Information about coronavirus and the university's response](#)
- [Guidance for students, faculty and staff](#)
- [Resources for faculty](#)
- [Resources for COVID-19 research](#)
- [Resources for students](#)
- [Resources for staff](#)
- [Wellness resources](#)