Research Safety Procedures to Reduce COVID-19 Transmission

Updated: August 27, 2020

General Principles
As research begins a planned, gradual phase-in return to campus, population density must be managed and safe practices must be followed to promote the health and safety of all UCI faculty, trainees, students, and staff. At a minimum, it is required that all personnel follow guidelines outlined in this document.

Daily Symptom Check
Early detection of illness can prevent the spread of COVID-19 to your colleagues. The Chancellor’s Executive Directive on Daily Symptom Check requires that UCI personnel monitor their health daily. For more information, please visit the CDC website for symptoms. If you need assistance in making a decision about seeking appropriate medical care, use the Coronavirus Self-Checker tool on CDC’s website.

Promptly notify supervisor and do not report to on-site work if you have been exposed or have contracted COVID-19. Supervisors are responsible for notifying UCI Human Resources (HR) to report confirmed and suspected COVID-19 cases by following instructions located at the following URL: https://hr.uci.edu/disaster-relief/report-known-cases.php. The university follows all confidentiality and privacy obligations.

Personal Hygiene
- Employees must wash their hands with soap for at least 20 seconds before putting on PPE (including face coverings used in non-laboratory research settings, after removing PPE, and after removing their gloves).
- Hand soap must be available at all sinks.
- Remove gloves before leaving the lab. Gloves should not be worn in hallways, elevators, or offices.
- Wash hands after touching any frequently used item or high-touch surface.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue or inside your elbow, even when wearing a face covering.

Face Coverings and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
Face coverings are required to worn as directed by the Chancellor’s Executive Directive and by the state of California’s mandate. Face coverings need to cover the mouth and nose. Face coverings are not PPE and do not help minimize potential exposures like dust and spray in an industrial setting. Supplies of PPE, must continue to be reserved for those who need them to protect themselves against risks in their workplace.

All personnel working in laboratories are required to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including gloves, lab coats, and eye protection when working with hazardous materials. PPE must be removed before leaving the laboratory.
Research personnel working in non-laboratory settings are also required to wear a face covering as directed in the Chancellor’s Executive Directive. Doing so, even when working alone in a room that will be used by others at another time, can help minimize the potential for virus transmission.

Maintaining Adequate Physical Distancing

- Work in laboratories should be scheduled (assign rotating shifts) to ensure reduced population density that allows for prescribed physical distancing.
- When working in a space with others, a minimum of 6 feet distance should be maintained whenever possible.
- Collaborate with the users of shared research areas to set up a scheduling system to facilitate and promote physical distancing.
- Maintaining at least six feet of separation is everyone’s responsibility, but you are responsible for yourself. Be aware of your surroundings, pay attention to others, and maintain your separation by yielding to them. For example, if you are entering a small room that it's occupied, yield to the other person, step back and give them at least six feet of separation so they may exit the room safely.
- Where corridors less than 6 feet in width are in use, and another individual is present, stay as far apart as possible if you are traveling in opposite directions, and remain at least six feet apart when traveling in the same direction.
- Where practicable, change work processes to assign specific tasks to the same person to avoid movement across laboratories. Ensure that personnel have the required training if they are performing new tasks.

Special Considerations
For situations where emergency services or training must be performed, but lab staff cannot be at least 6 feet apart, EHS recommendations taking the following steps to provide adequate control methods during these situations:

1. Hold remote sessions on the computer when the option is viable
2. Break groups into sub-groups in order to keep group size as small as possible
3. Schedule frequent breaks
4. Sanitize the space before use
5. All participants should wear face coverings at all times
6. Sanitize the space during breaks, and after use

Disinfecting Protocols
Wipe down and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces and frequently used objects at the beginning, middle and end of each shift. Please visit the EH&S website for cleaning procedures for general laboratories in response to COVID-19 and chemical disinfectants against SARS-CoV-2.

Periodic Spot Inspections
Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) will perform periodic spot inspections of campus areas, including labs, to monitor compliance with the above requirements.

COVID-19 EH&S Lab Safety Spot Checklist (SAMPLE CHECKLIST)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Review Criteria</th>
<th>Compliant (Yes/No)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintain physical distancing (minimum of 6 feet between lab/staff members).</td>
<td>Visibly check the work area to ensure UCI physical distancing procedures are being followed.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Verify cloth face coverings are worn/available where physical distancing is not possible (unless alone in a private office or eating in break areas apart from others).</strong></td>
<td><strong>Verify face coverings are being worn in compliance with UCI requirements.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Verify required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including gloves, lab coats, and eye protection are worn by all staff when working with hazardous materials or when required by standard operating procedures, etc.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Verify appropriate PPE is being worn correctly based on the exposure/risk and signage posted at the time of the spot check.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Verify lab-specific detailed risk assessment has been completed and submitted to authorized official</strong></td>
<td><strong>Review the site-specific plan approved by the authorized official. There should be a copy available at the time of the spot check to review and verify.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Verify that a site-specific protection plan (including a plan to monitor compliance) is available and implemented in the lab/workspace.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Verify that the required site-specific protection plan has been completed by the plan owner. There should be a copy available at the time of the spot check to review and verify.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Verify that required safety training has been completed and documents for all staff present at the time of the spot check.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Verify that the required safety training has been completed by reviewing applicable training records. There should be a copy of all training records/certification that training has been completed available at the time of the spot check to review and verify.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Surface disinfectants, soap, and water are all readily available in the laboratory.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Verify that appropriate cleaning and disinfectant supplies are available to all lab/workspace personnel.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Noncompliant behaviors observed at the time of inspection (explain):</strong></td>
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