MCB Graduate Student Virtual Forum

2/21/2020

Why are we reopening of research at UConn?

- Governor Lamont's Executive Order: May 20th reopening allows University Research to restart

- UConn established a procedure to gradually reopen labs:

"The gradual process to reopen labs will begin on May 20, 2020. Labs CANNOT reopen until they obtain approval from the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) to resume research activity. "

The goal is "establishing requirements and a culture of the campus being open. Signage on requirements for mask, distancing and other measures will begin to be posted. We need to set expectations that everyone follows what is required." (Wesley Byerly, Vice President)

What is the process for a lab to obtain approval from OVPR to open for research?

✓ The PI of the lab needs to fill out a [Resuming Research Activity form](#)

✓ The PI of the lab needs to prepare a [COVID-19 Safety Plan.docx](#)

✓ The PI needs to guarantee that everyone takes the [Returning to Research COVID-19 Safety Training](#)

✓ The PI needs keep an [On Premises Research Log.pdf](#)

✓ Adequate PPE needs to be present

✓ [COVID-19 Notice signage.pdf](#) needs to be posted

What is the COVID-19 Safety Plan?

- It lists all the rooms that the research will take place in

- It describes the steps that will be taken to minimize personnel density, allow distancing, and reduce the chances for transmission.
    - Sets a maximum number of people per lab or shared area
    - It may setup a staggered work schedule
    - It may describe engineering controls to improve distancing
    - It prohibits using common areas and break rooms

- It describes the process that will be used to clean common touch points and equipment that will not be cleaned by Housekeeping.

- It describes the process that will be used to monitor compliance with this COVID-19 Safety Plan, as well as CDC, state, and University requirements related to COVID-19 in the workplace, including personal health monitoring prior to coming to work.

- It specifies who will be responsible for monitoring CDC, state, and University requirements related to COVID-19 in the workplace, updating this plan as required, and communicating changes to personnel.

- It specifies who will be responsible for ensuring each individual signing below has completed initial and any subsequent required COVID-19 training.

Can everyone go back to lab now?

No !

What do I need to do to allowed to come back to lab?

- Your PI's lab needs to have been approved by the OVPR to reopen

- You need to take the [Returning to Research COVID-19 Safety Training](#) and forward the confirmation e-mail to your PI.

- You need to read and sign the lab's a [COVID-19 Safety Plan.docx](#)

What do I need to do when I come to lab?

- You need to be healthy and have no COVID-19 symptoms
- You need to wear a mask (cloth is okay) when you enter and leave the building
- You need to sign in, confirm you are healthy, list the rooms you will be entering and sign out when you leave
- You need to wear a face mask provided by the lab while working
- You cannot eat and drink inside the building
- Only one person in the elevator, avoid using the elevator to go down when possible
- You need to follow floor and lab specific COVID-19 plans
  - Washing hands when entering and leaving the labs
  - Disinfecting surfaces, commonly touched areas before work and at the end of work

COVID-19 NOTICE

STOP

ARE YOU EXPERIENCING?

- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing
- Fever (at or above 100.4°F)

- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste/smell

IN THE LAST 14 DAYS HAVE YOU?

- Had close contact with anyone diagnosed with or under investigation for COVID-19?

- Been told you should quarantine or isolate because of travel or other exposures?

IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO ANY QUESTION DO NOT ENTER

IF YOU ANSWERED NO TO ALL QUESTIONS

you may enter, provided that you have your manager's permission to enter and comply with the following:

Masks or cloth face coverings are required at all times.

Maintain safe distancing, at least 6 feet from others.

Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds often. Use hand sanitizer when hand washing is not possible.

Clean and disinfect shared objects after each use. Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces in your area daily.

On premises log

Resuming Research Activity – On Premises Personnel Log

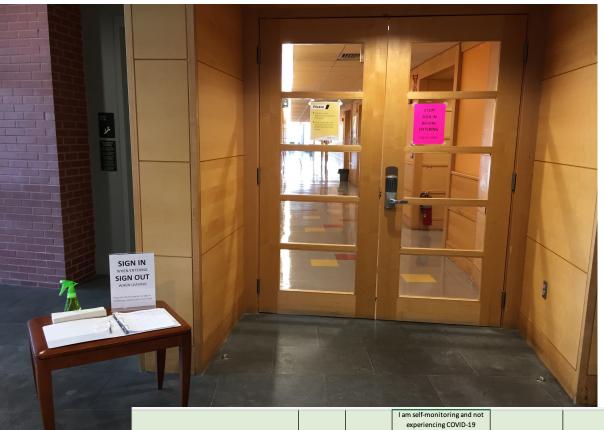If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms:
- o Cough
- o Shortness of breath
- o Difficulty breathing
- o Fever
- o Chills
- o Repeated shaking with chills
- o Muscle pain
- o Headache
- o Sore throat
- o New loss of taste or smell

You should
1. Not report for work
2. Contact your personal physician or call the UConn Health COVID-19 Call Center at 860-679-3199 for further guidance
3. Contact your manager or supervisor

Building/Room Location:

Name (Print)		Date Time In	Date Time Out	I am self-monitoring and not experiencing COVID-19 symptoms Name (Signature)
	PI/Lab		Room #	

NAME	TIME IN	TIME OUT	I am self-monitoring and not experiencing COVID-19 symptoms (signature)	PI/Lab	Room #

What to do if I test positive for COVID-19?

- Take care of yourself and contact your physician or UCONN Health COVID-19
- Inform your PI
- Uconn will determine who the employee had close contact with
- Facilities will be notified and shut down the lab until disinfected and work with EHS to determine when to reopen.
- HR will work with the individual to determine pay, etc.
- The employee needs to self-quarantine and if healthy can work remotely
- UConn will maintain the privacy of the individual as much as possible
- Contact PI first when you receive permission to return

How is the department organizing the opening?

- For BPB, there are 3 floor coordinators (Adam Zweifach, Nathan Alder and Joerg Graf) and they have been coordinating with Michael Lynes and Carol Teschke a common set of rules

- For ESB, Barbara Mellone is the floor coordinator

- The layout of TLS does not require a floor coordinator.

How do you autoclave in BPB?

- Sign up on Google calendar
- Put cart in queue with material to be autoclaved, instructions on settings and cell phone number.
- Autoclave usage will be based on sequence of queue, with the understanding that we all need to be courteous in using them (e.g., no line-jumping; put in the next person's stuff when you take yours out, etc.)
- Text the person whose items you take out of the autoclave to let them know they are done

Is there a plan in place for how the core facilities (particularly equipment in room G05) will be operating?

Summary of Dan Schwartz' response:

- You need to forward the core facility the approval notification from OVPR

- All facilities require face masks before any work could be performed and they all have protocols in place with regard to cleaning/disinfecting, number of users and timing of users, etc.

- You need to contact the facility director to find out the COVID-19 safety plan for each core facility

- If you have concerns or uncomfortable discussing something with the core director, please reach out to Dan Schwartz (daniel.schwartz@uconn.edu).

What if I feel pressure from my PI to come in but I do not feel safe and do not want to?

If you do not feel safe you do not need to come in and work from home.

If you feel pressure from your PI, you can reach out to

- Joerg Graf or Chelsea Bartos (but we may not be able to keep it confidential)
- Anyone from the graduate school (but they may not be able to keep it confidential)
- The university ombudsman

At least in BPB research areas, it seems that one person is allowed to be present per module in the lab spaces, but will there be limits on how many total people are allowed on the floor at once?

The number of people per lab varies with each lab's Safety Plan. But there is no limit of how many people can be on the entire floor in BPB and TLS.

We have a google calendar for BPB's shared equipment to help social distancing and can make one for other buildings as well.

Writing and data analysis should be done at home if at all possible.

Gatherings in common areas are not allowed

Only one person should use bathrooms, kitchen or other common space at a time.

After getting OVPR approval to resume lab activities, are there any restrictions on when graduate students are allowed to be in the lab, including evenings and weekends?

Wesley Byerly's, Assoc. Vice President, response: "They should apply their approved plan across the weekend days. No need to update/amend"

PI's are supposed to act as supervisors making sure everyone is following proper safety procedures. In addition, the PI's would need a wet-ink signature confirming the procedures were being followed. If a graduate student wanted to pursue research in the evenings or on the weekends, what are the requirements of the PI?

Wesley Byerly's, Assoc. Vice President, response: "PIs don't need to be present every day. However, they do need to be present often enough to provide oversight. There is a requirement the PI or designee to sign off on the logs weekly. This ensures the PI is in touch with the lab at least that frequently."

What is the coordination across departments?

- The safety plans are developed by each PI.

- If you go to a different department in a different building you need to follow their safety plan.

- As this plan may differ from yours you need to ask them for the information.

I saw a few people I didn't recognize without masks walking around up and atom.
Is there an appropriate channel to report this through?

- We should all take an active role in ensuring the safety measures are followed. In a polite manner ask them to wear a mask.

- You can report it to your floor coordinator, Joerg Graf, or Michael Lynes.

Who is maintaining the Google Calendar? Do we need to request access for the Google calendar?

- The google calendar is maintained by Ciara.

- To obtain access your PI needs to forward the OVPR approval e-mail to Maggie. This contains the names of the approved people.

- Maggie will forward this to Ciara who will send out the invites.

- TLS autoclaves will be managed by this as well.

Are those logs collected by someone?

- The logs are collected weekly by the floor coordinator or the PI.
- They can be scanned and sent to Maggie

My lab is approved for critical infrastructure, do we follow Phase 2 rules?

- Yes, if your lab is approved for critical infrastructure (Phase 0), you need to follow phase 2 rules and you cannot restart research.

Is there a timeline to get to Phase 3? If not, what are the thresholds for moving up to Phase 3 or back to Phase 1?

- We are not aware of a timeline for Phase 3.
- We are not aware of thresholds but we are supposed to be ready to shut down in case things get worse.

Do we have any more clarity on the headache symptom?

It is best to err on the side of caution as the outbreak in Munich was started by an individual who mistook her symptoms for jetlag. Perhaps, the best approach is to take the same as for the loss of smell. If you have always headaches, they are not a good indicator for a change in health status. But please be extra careful if the headaches are different than the ones you normally experience.

Do we know how many labs are approved for phase 2?

- As of right now, we are aware of 4 MCB labs having received approval to restart research.

Is there a plan for PCR or antibody testing being readily available on campus?

- Right now there is not plan to test people coming to campus
- For the fall the plan is to use a PCR assay for testing.

Do we need to bring enough water with us from home to last the day?

- I recommend you bring your own water with you for now. The water has been sitting still in our pipes and need to be flushed through.

I'm concerned about what Tony said about the buildings being unlocked. Shouldnt we be limititing building access to effectively be tracing?

- We are looking into this. Thank you for the suggestion.

What are the rules surrounding the MCB PPE stash? Are there limits and how is it enforced?

- Each lab can take one box of gloves of each size and one bag of masks.
- Students from ESB or TLS should have access to BPB201 but if not contact Joerg Graf and he will let you in.
- It is enforced by the honor system.
- Please sign the sheet on the 2nd floor to indicate you were there.

How is using physical premises sign in/out sheet handled contamination wise? Do you use gloves and personal writing utensil?

- I recommend you bring your own pen

- There is a pen attached. There are also soap and paper towels so you can wipe everything down.

- After you enter the research wing and go into your lab you should wash your hands with soap for at least 20 seconds.

Are the envelopes for the masks specific, or is it just as effective to store the masks in a ziplock bag in between uses?

- The paper envelopes allow the masks to dry out. The drying out will kill SARS CoV-2. Ziplock bags would retain the moisture and the virus would stay alive longer.