Guidelines for Conducting Research During Safe Start

In effect starting June 1, 2020 and until further notice (Last updated October 2, 2020)

Overall University of Washington information: Novel coronavirus & COVID-19 facts and resources

The Chemistry Department is committed to protecting the safety of all researchers in the department during this challenging time. The guidelines below are meant to provide information specific to spaces within the Chemistry department. They have been developed in accord with the guidelines and requirements provided by UW EH&S and the UW Office of Research and are not meant to contradict or supersede that guidance. Please read those documents carefully and be sure you understand them.

In accordance with the University and state guidelines, the Chemistry Department plans to gradually phase in in-person research. In the first phase, the number of people allowed in the department will be limited. Researchers must be designated “critical personnel” by the department before they will be allowed to enter the Department during this time. Importantly, during this first phase, all work that can be conducted remotely must be, and anyone who comes into the Chemistry Department must be doing so completely voluntarily.

Failing to comply with any of the listed requirements below may result in suspension of individuals or entire research groups from on-site research until the COVID-19 related restrictions are lifted.

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General Chemistry Department Guidelines

What work can be done on-site?
- On-site work is restricted to work that requires being on-site to accomplish. In the Department of Chemistry, this includes laboratory research that must be performed in on-site laboratories for both safety and access to required equipment.
- All work that is possible to accomplish remotely must remain off-site.
- **Plan ahead:** Know exactly what you will be doing before you arrive on-site so you can minimize time in the buildings.
- Activity should be scheduled so that researchers spend the minimum amount of time on-site required to accomplish the work. For example, this means that in most cases offices should be limited in use to a location for storing personal items that should not be in a laboratory. Offices should not be used for anything that takes more than a few minutes, and only when required to support other approved on-site activity or collect items needed for off-site work.

Who can work on-site?
- Only those faculty, graduate students, postdocs and staff that have been approved by the department to perform work that requires being on-site.
- At this time undergraduate researchers are not allowed to participate in on-site work.

Who can be required to work on-site during this time?
- **NO ONE**
- Graduate students and postdocs may choose not to participate in on-site research.
- No explanation is necessary.
- Research advisors and supervisors must not coerce or pressure any trainees to work on-site.

If I have suggestions for improvements, concerns about a protocol, or concerns that the safety protocols are not being followed, what should I do?
- You should report your concerns to your COVID supervisor. For many this will be the faculty research advisor.
- If you are not comfortable reporting it to your immediate supervisor, you should report it to:
  - Department Administrator Paul Miller (206) 543-1612
  - Department Chair Munira Khalil (206) 543-1613
  - Associate Professor Forrest Michael, Safety Committee Chair (206) 543-6519

Illness/Attestation
- **Under no circumstances** should anyone enter any Chemistry Department buildings while sick.
- **Before** coming to work, everyone must complete a daily attestation of wellness in Workday, and all supervisors must check daily to see that the attestation has been completed.
- If you feel unwell or develop symptoms after arriving at the Department, you must go home immediately. Consult [https://www.washington.edu/coronavirus/faq/](https://www.washington.edu/coronavirus/faq/) for the course of action recommended by the University of Washington in the case of the suspected case of COVID-19, including the guidelines for the initial assessment of your symptoms and the list of resources for getting tested and diagnosed.
- If your healthcare provider confirms or suspects that you have a case of COVID-19, inform the EH&S Employee Health Center at 206-685-1026 or emplth@uw.edu immediately.

Social and Physical Distance
- Maintain appropriate social distancing (6 feet or greater) at all times in all spaces in the department. Masks are not a substitute...
for maintaining this distance.

Face Masks and Gloves

- All standard laboratory PPE requirements still apply and always take precedence.
- Gloves may be used in specific lab spaces, but the general department policy prohibiting the use of gloves outside of lab spaces (i.e. in corridors and stairwells) remains in place.
- Face masks are required at all times in common areas, hallways, and shared departmental facilities.
- Face coverings (masks) are considered part of your personal attire. They are not considered laboratory PPE. Think of face masks in the same category as long pants and closed-toe shoes: they are required personal attire that should not interfere with any required PPE or create any additional safety hazards.
- If you need to adjust your face mask, take off your gloves, wash your hands, and leave the room if others are nearby.
- Follow CDC guidelines and UW EH&S guidance on face mask use.
- Be sure your face mask fits securely and comfortably before coming in to work.
- Just like any article of clothing or part of your personal attire, if a face mask becomes contaminated by laboratory chemicals it should be disposed of as hazardous waste.
- The University strongly discourages the use of surgical/medical masks so as to reserve them for critical healthcare use.
- EH&S also discourages the use of cloth masks for work with flammables and in biosafety level 2 or higher spaces.
- Masks will be available to all department staff and researchers through the chemistry stockroom, but you are also welcome to provide your own.

Decontamination of hands, surfaces and work areas

- Washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is the best method to minimize viral spread.
- Hand sanitizers, 70% EtOH, or iPrOH can be used when soap and water is not an option.
- All researchers will use sanitizer or wash their hands with soap and water upon arrival in the building and immediately prior to departure.
- All researchers will wash their hands with soap and water as often as it is practical while on-site, and always after contact with others.
- Surfaces and shared equipment/tools should be cleaned with 70% EtOH or iPrOH before and after each individual user. To facilitate cleaning, surfaces should be kept free of clutter.
- Do not use excessive amounts of sanitizer, especially where it may damage equipment or mechanisms. For most equipment, wiping with 70% EtOH or iPrOH is sufficient.
- When you plan your schedule, you must plan for an appropriate amount of time to allow decontamination of the space before and after use. This will vary depending on the nature of the workspace, but schedules that do not provide time for decontamination between uses are not allowed.
- It is recommended that some type of visible reminder to decontaminate each space be posted clearly.

Other general common area policies

- Please be respectful of other people in common areas and be sure you understand the requirements for using those spaces before you enter them. If something is unclear, ask.
- Do not spend any more time than necessary in common areas. Touch as few surfaces as possible.
- Communicate clearly with those you encounter in common spaces to ensure you can maintain 6 ft of distance at all times.

Building Access

- Department of Chemistry buildings will remain locked and restricted to card-key access. If you have received approval to work on site, you will have card-key access.
- Every individual must swipe their card-key when entering the building to help with contact tracing.
- If you happen to arrive with a someone else, do not hold the door. Each person must swipe their card and enter separately.
- Do NOT prop open doors! Theft remains a significant issue.
• For the Chemistry Library building, use typical manual door access.
• Upon entering any Department of Chemistry building, use proper hand sanitation at stations at entrances.

Custodial Services
• Common spaces will be cleaned by custodial services. This will happen at least once a day, but we expect adjustments to that schedule depending on the level of activity in the building. Also, we cannot control or predict the level of decontamination, always act as if the spaces have not been cleaned.

Hallways
• Most hallways are 6 feet wide or wider so you should be able to maintain 6 ft of separation at all times.
• For narrow hallways, single direction use should be observed. If there is someone coming in the opposite direction, wait for the other person to pass.
• Hallways should be used for transit between spaces only. Do not congregate or stop to talk with others, even when maintaining 6 ft distance.

Elevators and Stairwells
• All elevators are designated as single occupancy only. Signs will be posted.
• Except in emergencies, stairwells are designated for one direction only (up or down).
• All stairwells in Bagley Hall and Chemistry Building are unidirectional.
• Signs are posted on every floor and on every stairwell door labeling directionality.

Bathrooms:
• All bathrooms are designated as single occupancy only.

Conference Rooms:
• Conference rooms are closed and are not available for routine use. In extraordinary circumstances, you may petition the department for permission to use these rooms.

Food consumption on site:
• If it can be avoided, food should not be prepared or consumed on-site.
• If it is absolutely necessary, food should be consumed only in areas previously designated for food and drink, social distance must be maintained, and all surfaces must be sanitized before and after use.

Doors:
• Doors to labs and offices should never be propped open.
• Building air balance is important to the proper functioning of chemical hoods and proper air exchange. This would be affected by propping open doors. Furthermore, laboratories are not generally spaces that are safe to allow uncontrolled entry.
• Laboratory and office doors should remain locked for safety and to reduce unintended occupancy.

Hand sanitizers and cleaning solutions are available throughout the Department of Chemistry buildings. These are intended for on-site use only. They should not be taken off-site.

Protocols for Specific Departmental Facilities
NMR facilities (BAG 37 and 46B)
(Rajan Paranji or Adrienne Roehrich, maximum occupancy: 1 researcher per NMR machine)
Reduced staff support during this time, with no hands-on help. Limited new user training is available, primarily remote with a restricted in-lab component. Please contact staff by phone or mail for support. Staff will wipe down main surfaces at the beginning of the day, midday, and end of day.

- You may only go to the NMR facility during your scheduled NMR time. Leave a 10 minute buffer between the end of the previous reservation and the start of yours. Consider taking all ready samples from your group as a batch.
- Before leaving your lab, wash hands and make sure you are wearing a mask. After this point, never touch your face.
- Bring samples in a container for transport and wipe down the outsides of the container and sample with 70% EtOH.
- Transport container and samples to NMR room.
- If the previous user is still there, ask (from the doorway) when they will finish. No more than one person may wait in the hallway, and adhering to reservation times will prevent it entirely.
- Maintain 6 ft distance between people at all times.
- Avoid bringing your phone or other personal belongings into the lab, or if not possible, do not touch them while in the lab.
- After entering the room, put samples on the bench.
- Put on fresh gloves and wear for the entire duration of equipment use.
- DO NOT TOUCH YOUR FACE or hair or headphones.
- Collect data.
- If the acquisition is a long one, leave the facility, and return shortly before it completes.
- Collect your materials.
- Take off gloves.
- Return to lab.
- Wash hands with soap and water.

MS facilities (BAG 83, 83A, and 87)

(Martin Sadilek or Loren Kruse, maximum user occupancy: 2 each in 83 and 87, 1 in 83A)

Reduced staff support during this time, with no hands-on help. Limited new user training is available. Please contact staff by phone or mail for support and training arrangements. Staff will wipe down main surfaces at the beginning of the day, midday, and end of day.

- You may only go to the MS facility during your scheduled time. Leave a 10 minute buffer between the end of the previous reservation and the start of yours. Adjacent instruments may not have overlapping reservations; a reservation on one instrument will automatically create blocking reservations on nearby instruments.
- Before leaving your lab, wash hands and make sure you are wearing a mask. After this point, never touch your face.
- Bring samples in a container for transport and wipe down the outsides of all containers and sample vials with 70% EtOH.
- Transport container to MS facility.
- Check through the windows; if the previous user is still there, please wait outside until they are finished. Do not exceed the maximum occupancy of the MS rooms. No more than one person may wait outside. Do not prop open the doors.
- Maintain 6 ft distance between people at all times.
- Avoid bringing your phone or other personal belongings into the lab, or if not possible, do not touch them while in the lab.
- After entering the room, put samples on the bench.
- Put on fresh gloves and wear for the entire time in the MS facility.
- DO NOT TOUCH YOUR FACE or hair or headphones.
- Collect data. Afterwards, use 70% ethanol and towel to wipe down parts touched: keyboard, mouse, syringe pump, etc.
- Collect your materials.
- Take off gloves.
• Return to lab.
• Wash hands with soap and water.

ICP Instrument Space (BAG 133A)

(Adrienne Roehrich, maximum occupancy: 1 ICP user)

• You may only go to the facility during your scheduled time. Leave a 30 minute buffer (minimum reservation interval) between the end of the previous reservation and the start of yours.
• Before leaving your lab, wash hands and make sure you are wearing a mask. After this point, never touch your face.
• Bring samples in a container for transport and wipe down the outsides of all containers and sample vials with 70% EtOH.
• Transport container to facility.
• If the previous user is still there, please wait outside until they are finished. Do not exceed the maximum occupancy.
• Maintain 6 ft distance between people at all times.
• Do not touch your phone or other personal belongings (headphones) while in the lab.
• After entering the room, put samples on the bench.
• Put on fresh gloves if needed, but do **not** use the same gloves to touch samples and the computer.
• **DO NOT TOUCH YOUR FACE** or hair or headphones.
• Collect data
• Collect your materials.
• Take off gloves.
• Return to lab.
• Wash hands with soap and water.

Stockroom (BAG 36)

(Lochlan Hickok, maximum occupancy: 2 researchers)

• Before leaving your lab, wash hands and make sure you are wearing a mask. After this point, never touch your face.
• Bring a container for transport and wipe down the outsides of your container with 70% EtOH.
• When you arrive at the stockroom, check the door to see if the maximum occupancy has been reached. If there is room for one more person, you may enter. You may not enter the stockroom without the permission of the person in charge.
• If the stockroom is full, wait in line outside the stockroom. Stand in the places marked with tape to ensure proper distancing.
• When a space becomes available, you may enter with permission.
• Put on fresh gloves and wear them for the entire time you are in the stockroom.
• **DO NOT TOUCH YOUR FACE** or hair or headphones.
• Collect your materials and check out.
• Take off gloves.
• Return to lab.
• Wash hands with soap and water.

Cold rooms

(Paul Miller, BAG 192R, CHB 205, CHB 305, CHB 405, maximum occupancy: 1)

• Before leaving your lab, wash hands and make sure you are wearing a mask. After this point, never touch your face.
• Bring samples in a container for transport and wipe down the outsides of all containers and sample vials with 70% EtOH
• Transport container to cold room
When you reach the room, knock loudly to determine whether someone else is still in the room. If so, step back at least 6 feet and wait for them to leave.

- Do not touch your phone or other personal belongings (headphones) while in the cold room.
- After entering the room, put samples on the bench.
- Put on fresh gloves and wear for the entire duration of equipment use.
- DO NOT TOUCH YOUR FACE or hair or headphones.
- Perform your required work in the cold room.
- Collect your materials.
- Take off gloves.
- Return to lab.
- Wash hands with soap and water.

**Gas Cylinder Room (CHB G043)**

*(Lochlan Hickok, maximum occupancy: 1)*

- Before leaving your lab, wash hands and make sure you are wearing a mask. After this point, never touch your face.
- Obtain cart and key from the stockroom.
- Wipe down cart with 70% EtOH
- Go to cylinder storage room and obtain cylinder
- Return to stockroom with cylinder to check out
- Upon return to stockroom, wipe down cart, tank, and key with 70% EtOH
- Transport cylinder to your laboratory and swap out for empty cylinder.
- Return empty cylinder to cylinder room
- Return cart and key to stockroom and wipe down cart and key with 70% EtOH.
- Return to lab.
- Wash hands with soap and water.

**Autoclave Rooms (BAG 192S, 465, CHB G002)**

*(Bill Beaty or Nicholas Breen, maximum occupancy: 1 at each)*

- Before leaving your lab, wash hands and make sure you are wearing a mask. After this point, never touch your face.
- Bring materials in a container for transport and wipe down the outsides of your container with 70% EtOH.
- Please be careful to ensure that any items going in the autoclave are completely free of EtOH or other flammables before arriving in the autoclave room to avoid possible explosion hazard.
- Transport container to autoclave room.
- When you reach the room, check if anyone is still in the room. If so, step back at least 6 feet and wait for them to leave.
- Do not touch your phone or other personal belongings (headphones) while in the autoclave room.
- After entering the room, put container on the bench.
- Put on fresh gloves and wear for the entire duration of equipment use.
- DO NOT TOUCH YOUR FACE or hair or headphones.
- Perform your required work in the autoclave room.
- When you are finished, collect your materials and wipe down everything with 70% EtOH
- Take off gloves.
- Return to lab.
- Wash hands with soap and water.
Bulk Solvent Room (CHB G055)
(Lochlan Hickok, maximum occupancy: 1)

- Before leaving your lab, wash hands and make sure you are wearing a mask. After this point, never touch your face.
- Bring solvent cans in a container for transport and wipe down the outsides of container and all solvent cans with 70% EtOH
- Transport container to Bulk Solvent Room
- When you reach the room, knock loudly to determine whether someone else is still in the room. If so, step back at least 6 feet and wait for them to leave.
- Do not touch your phone or other personal belongings (headphones) while in the cold room.
- After entering the room, put container on the floor.
- Put on fresh gloves and wear for the entire duration of time in the room.
- DO NOT TOUCH YOUR FACE or hair or headphones.
- Fill your solvent cans.
- Collect your materials.
- Take off gloves.
- Return to lab.
- Wash hands with soap and water.

Liquid Nitrogen Dispensing Rooms (CHB 205, 305, 405)
(Lochlan Hickok, maximum occupancy: 1)

- Before leaving your lab, wash hands and make sure you are wearing a mask. After this point, never touch your face.
- Wipe down LN2 dewar with 70% EtOH
- Transport dewar to LN2 self-dispensing Room
- When you reach the room, knock loudly to determine whether someone else is still in the room. If so, step back at least 6 feet and wait for them to leave.
- Do not touch your phone or other personal belongings (headphones) while in the service room.
- Put on fresh gloves and wear for the entire duration of time in the room.
- After entering the room, put container on the floor, prop door and follow normal procedures for filling LN2 dewar.
- DO NOT TOUCH YOUR FACE or hair or headphones.
- Fill your dewar.
- Collect your materials.
- Take off gloves.
- Return to lab.
- Wash hands with soap and water.

Bike Storage Area
(BAG/CHB dock, maximum occupancy: 1)

- To facilitate commuting by bike, the bike storage room is available for use and is designated single occupancy. Upon arriving at storage room, check to see if there is someone in the bike area. If so, verbally notify them of your intent to store/retrieve your bike then wait for them to exit the area.
- Please turn the lights off when you leave the bike room, so it is clear when it is unoccupied.

Machine Shop (BAG 82)
The machine shop is available for access on a consulting or appointment basis only. Contact Kevin Soderlund (kevins@uw.edu) for information pertaining to access or jobs. Typical face mask and physical distancing operations will be in place.

Electronics Shop (BAG 74)

The electronics shop is available for access on a consulting or appointment basis only. Contact Lon Buck (lbuck@uw.edu) for information pertaining to access or jobs. Typical face mask and physical distancing operations will be in place.

X-Ray Crystallography (CHL 125)

The X-ray crystallography facility is available for access on a consulting or appointment basis only. Contact Werner Kaminsky (wernerka@uw.edu) for information pertaining to access or jobs. Typical face mask and physical distancing operations will be in place.

Administrative Offices (BAG 109 and 303)

There will be minimal staffing of the administrative offices. No access will be provided to Bagley 109. Please contact all departmental staff directly via email or phone.

Individual lab space policies:

- If a research group would like to conduct in-person research, that group must propose and submit a plan for approval by the Chair before work will be allowed to start. This plan must address all facets of safe operation as set out by EH&S and the Office of Research at the links above. Use the checklist here as a guide.
- A COVID supervisor must be designated for all spaces. For most spaces, this can be the faculty research advisor responsible for that space.
- This plan should include specific procedures for keeping 6 foot distance between researchers at all times, frequent disinfecting of common surfaces, and proper monitoring that researchers are not in lab while they are sick.
- As part of this plan, the group must submit (a) a floorplan of their space, (b) an estimation of the maximum capacity of each room/area and (c) a system for scheduling to ensure that this capacity is not exceeded.
- The group must also provide a plan for frequent cleaning and disinfecting of commonly-touched surfaces and a plan for proper use of personal equipment (i.e. gloves/masks) to help prevent the spread of the virus.
- Once a plan has been submitted and approved, all group members must be trained in the plan by the COVID supervisor and the time and manner of that training must be documented. Upon joining a group, all new group members must be trained and their training must be documented.
- While these guidelines are in place, all objects covering any windows to the exterior hallway should be removed to make it easier to assess the safety of researchers in these spaces.
- No in-person meetings. All meetings should continue to take place remotely.
- In-person conversation should be avoided.

View lab-specific plans (Chemistry-affiliated NetID login required)

Summary of general guidelines for COVID-19 prevention while working in the laboratory

Guidelines for laboratory personnel safety:

1. **Stop, think, attest** – perform daily attestations of wellness.
2. **Never come to work at a laboratory or research facility if you are experiencing any symptoms of infection.**
3. **If you come to work and start showing any possible symptoms of illness, you must leave the lab and inform your PI or supervisor and healthcare provider.**
4. Be present in the lab only as long as necessary for your experiment. Minimize time around other people.
5. Assume everyone you see is infected, including yourself, and use appropriate precautions. Some transmission occurs from
Guidelines for operating a safe laboratory:

1. **If your health care provider suspects or confirms you have COVID-19, contact the EH&S Employee Health Center at 206-685-1026 or emphlth@uw.edu.**

2. Maintain at least 6 feet between researchers at all times.

3. Follow your lab schedule to minimize the number of people in each laboratory room at any one time.

4. Stagger break times to minimize contact between people in rooms used for eating or drinking.

5. Disinfect lab surfaces regularly with 70% ethanol or another approved disinfectant after use. See EH&S guidelines.

6. Researchers will wash their hands with soap upon entering and before leaving the lab and touching shared accessory devices like phones (use speaker phone if possible).

7. Each researcher will have their own set of any tools that are used very frequently, including pipets, frequently used reagent bottles, laboratory notebooks, and pens.

8. Gloves, cloths, or disposable towels will be used when handling common reagent bottles, laboratory equipment, and cabinet handles.

9. Door handles will be wiped or sprayed with 70% ethanol or another approved disinfectant after use.

10. Use disposable tissues, Kimwipe, etc. to touch surfaces that cannot be disinfected and when gloves are not available.

11. Disinfect all shared equipment before and after each use.

12. Contact with other labs should be made via phone or electronic means except in cases of extreme emergency.

13. Transfer of items between labs should be arranged by leaving them in the hallway or other designated area rather than handing them over in person.

14. Use of shared facilities and other labs’ equipment should be pre-arranged in order to avoid accidental contact. Be sure that all users know lab sign-in procedures.

15. Use precautions when entering a restroom or other shared use facility. Call out to assess occupancy. Use a cloth or disposable towel to touch door handles and faucets and wash your hands upon entering and leaving.

**Additional information**

- UW Coronavirus Information
- EH&S COVID-19
- CDC handwashing guidelines

**Department of Chemistry Visitor COVID-19 Symptom Attestation for Working On-Site**

For each day that you visit the department, please print out the attestation form, complete it, and leave it with your host.

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