



GUIDE FOR RETURNING TO IN-PERSON RESEARCH PHASE 1: PLAN FOR ON-SITE FACILITIES AND SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL DISTANCING



INTRODUCTION

These important workplace COVID-19 prevention elements are developed to help ensure the health and safety of personnel by reducing the potential for COVID-19 transmission. They are based on [guidance](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the regulatory directive of the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) [Directive 1.70](#), and are required to be implemented in all University work environments including all research workplaces. (UW Medical Center personnel should follow UW Medicine protocols.) Departments or work units are required to document their site-specific COVID-19 prevention measures. In RARE INSTANCES, the University will consider exceptions to social and physical distancing if all other options to accomplish the essential work are not possible. Please see [EH&S guidance](#) regarding exceptions. Approval from the department level unit and additional procedures and personal protective equipment (PPE) are required.



WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

To help reduce the spread of COVID-19, the University of Washington is reminding everyone to practice social and physical distancing in your workplace. The [University Requirements for COVID-19 Prevention in the Workplace](#) help ensure our health and safety.



WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Review the social distancing plan that your supervisor or unit-head has created. Below is a list of both individual and supervisor responsibilities that will be included in that plan:

PREVENT CLOSE CONTACT

- Maintain at least 6 feet between people with or without the use of facemasks. This may require scheduling and shifts.
- Separate workstations by at least 6 feet or use physical barriers (e.g., curtains, shields).
- Allow only infrequent and intermittent passing within 6 feet.
- Limit the number of people riding in elevators; wait if necessary.
- Maintain social/physical distancing during breaks and at shift start and end times.
- Stagger break times.
- If travel is required, take separate vehicles.
- Whenever possible, schedule tasks for a later time and date.
- Organize work to break up tasks in a manner that facilitates social distancing or other protective measures.
- Hold all meetings/gatherings, including one-on-one meetings, online or over the phone.
- Avoid all physical contact, including hugging and handshakes.
- Most importantly, do not come to work if you are sick!





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WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW? (CONT.)

ORGANIZE THE WORK AREA

- Require one-at-a-time access at designated drop-off/pick-up points.
- Use drop boxes or bins to collect items.
- In the laboratory, move common equipment as necessary to maintain social distancing for its use.

CREATE A SCHEDULE

- Minimize the number of people in a work area at the same time.
- Small, narrow offices/facilities on the order of 100-150 square feet can likely accommodate only one person at a time.
- Square or rectangle work areas larger than 200 square feet can likely accommodate more people but keep the number to a minimum.

Rule of thumb: These square footage specifications are guidelines only. In general, occupants must be able to enter, work in, and exit the space while maintaining 6' of physical distance from other occupants.

COVID-19: OPERATION GUIDELINES FOR LABORATORY PERSONNEL

The key preventative measures for principal investigators (PIs) and lab managers should include:

- Encouraging telework or remote work as much as possible, minimizing the individuals who need to physically interact with one another (e.g., grant writing, data analysis, publications, literature reviews).
- Encouraging online learning (e.g., coding, statistics, trainings).
- Ensuring at least 6 feet of distance between individuals.
- Minimizing the number of individuals in any space as much as possible.
- Increasing disinfection of work surfaces and high-touch surfaces to at least daily.
- Ensuring that staff wash hands often- prior to leaving the laboratory and when removing gloves and other personal protective equipment.

Below is general information to help everyone reduce the risk of spreading coronaviruses by taking the same steps as you would to prevent infection from the flu and the common cold:

- **Stay home while you are sick** and avoid close contact with others.
- **Wash hands** often with soap and water for a least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer, with 60-95% alcohol if water is not available.
- **Avoid touching** your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- **Avoid contact with people who are sick.**
- **Cover your mouth and nose** with your elbow or a tissue when coughing or sneezing.



RESOURCES

- > [Stay Healthy Husky Guide: Social Distancing at Work](#) (Poster for your office and workspace)
- > [EH&S COVID-19 Health and Safety Resources](#)
- > [University Requirements for COVID-19 Prevention in the Workplace](#)
- > [Social distancing in laboratories and continuity guidance](#)
- > [Novel coronavirus & COVID-19: facts and resources](#)
- > [Mitigating Impacts to Research Activities due to COVID-19](#)