

## Safety Checklist

UMaine PIs need to develop a safety checklist to safely restart and conduct their research under the current COVID19 conditions. The safety checklist should follow the cognizant Local, State, and National Public Health Authority directives to shelter-at-home and implement social and physical distancing to minimize disease spread and exposure. The aim of this exercise is to protect the health and safety of faculty, staff, students, the public and human research subjects, using science-based evidence in establishing protocols. No researcher (faculty, staff member or student) should feel they are being compelled to work on campus or in the field during periods of broad shelter-at-home directives.

All research activities that cannot take place at home, including lab based research and field research, need to be approved. Requests should be submitted using the [Research & Scholarly Activity Request Form](#). The request form requires a justification for why the activity cannot be delayed, why it is essential research as defined above, information regarding the associated research personnel (including students) and the steps that will be taken to ensure the safety of participants during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This example document is based on documents that have been developed by the following Centers and research groups: ASCC, VEMI, Townsend and Tajvidi. The checklist should be adapted to suit the needs and conditions of each research lab.

### Before Re-Opening

- Research plan has been approved by UMaine (<https://umaine.edu/research/covid-19-on-campus-research-reporting/>)
- Hierarchy-of-controls (HOC) document has been filed with UMaine (<https://mycampus.maine.edu/group/mycampus/safety-environmental-management>)
- Elimination, substitution, engineering and administrative controls, as outlined in the HOC document, have been put in place
  - e.g. Plexiglass shields for separating work benches
- Personal protective equipment and other required preventative materials are in place
- Disinfectants and cleaning materials are in place
- High risk faculty, staff and students have been identified and will work from home
- All researchers (faculty, staff and students) understand that lab work is voluntary during the phased reopening of the UMaine research facilities
- All researchers (faculty, staff and students) have received COVID19 safety training
- All researchers (faculty, staff and students) have signed Safe Conduct of Research agreement
- COVID19 signage has been posted at lab entrances and exits (see attached examples)

### Scheduling Research Activities: Spatial and Temporal Distancing

- The Principal Investigator is responsible for the allocation of lab use to comply with physical distancing guidelines
- Work schedules are staggered to limit the number of people in the research facility
- Only researchers named in the approved research plan are allowed access to the research facility
- A calendar is used to manage lab occupancy and reserve equipment. Examples include a Google Calendar, Google Sheets, Office 365, etc.

- ❑ Lab space is allocated such that each researcher has at least 120 square feet of lab space to themselves (corresponds to a circle with  $r = 6'$ )
- ❑ Researchers sign in on the online scheduler when they enter the lab, and sign out when they leave the lab

## Safely Conducting Research

- ❑ Work should be done remotely to the greatest extent possible
- ❑ Meetings should be conducted virtually, instead of in-person
- ❑ Researchers must monitor themselves for [COVID19 symptoms](#)
- ❑ If a researcher is symptomatic, they must not come to work, call their doctor, and notify their supervisor (or the research group if the PI)
  - ❑ See attached document “Criteria for Returning to Work and When to Self-Isolate”
- ❑ Researchers must wear face masks around others in the community areas, labs, hallways, etc.
  - ❑ A researcher does not need to wear a face mask while working alone in a lab
- ❑ Researchers who cannot wear a face mask or choose not to wear a face mask should work remotely
- ❑ Work surfaces and high-touch surfaces and other frequent contact surfaces (door handles, etc) must be disinfected regularly. They should be wiped down with a disinfectant solution (10% bleach + 70% ethanol or EPA approved disinfectant) or disinfectant wipes
- ❑ Equipment, sample holders, etc., must be disinfected after use

## Safe Behavior - General

- ❑ Washing hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water is more effective at killing the virus than hand sanitize
- ❑ Avoid touching your face (virus particles gain entry via mouth, nose, eyes)
- ❑ Do not hug or touch other people, unless of your own household
- ❑ Cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow, not into your hands
- ❑ Maintain social distancing, with at least 6' of distance from others
- ❑ Wear face coverings at all times in public spaces, such as hallways, entrances and exits, stairs, etc.
- ❑ Bathrooms: Wait outside if there is a person in the bathroom
- ❑ Elevators: Wait for the next elevator if there is a person in the elevator
- ❑ If a person is returning to campus from out of state, a 14-day quarantine will be required prior to returning to work, which represents the period after recovery when patients may still be contagious