

Guidelines for COVID-19 prevention while working in the laboratory

May 20 Update

The purpose of this update is to revise School of Medicine guidance in order to be consistent with University of Washington guidance and to provide clarification where needed.

The original [Guidelines for COVID-19 prevention while working in the laboratory](#) were the basis for each laboratory to develop a **site-specific COVID -19 prevention plan**. The University will soon distribute an updated [University of Washington COVID-19 Prevention Plan for the Workplace](#). However, the parts of that plan that are particularly relevant to the research environment were communicated through an email to the community by Mary Lidstrom on May 14. They include the following items:

Approval of site-specific COVID -19 prevention plan by the laboratory's COVID-19 Supervisor (see below), principal investigator (PI) and department chair (or designee) is required. The approval must be indicated on the plan by signature and date.

COVID-19 Training: All critical personnel must be trained on the site-specific COVID-19 Prevention Plan. Documentation that the training occurred is required and may be in paper or electronic form.

COVID-19 Site Supervisor Designation: The COVID-19 Site Supervisor may be a personnel supervisor, PI, or designee that has the authority to monitor and enforce COVID-19 health and safety requirements and address questions and concerns from personnel. These duties may be updated from time-to-time by the University.

Laboratories must each designate a COVID-19 Site Supervisor as per the [University of Washington COVID-19 Prevention Plan for the Workplace](#), whose duties are to:

- Develop and ensure site-specific COVID-19 Prevention Plans, including social and physical distancing requirements, are adhered to.
- Ensure that everyone working in the laboratory has been trained in the site-specific COVID-19 prevention plan and maintain a log that records the date that the training was completed for each individual.
- Keep unit and/or site-specific plans current with changes to COVID-19 guidelines, regulations and University policies.
- Ensure the implementation of approved attestation mechanisms for all individuals (e.g., Workday, Catalyst or other method for individuals without a profile in Workday, Log books or other appropriate methods for visitors, etc.) coming to the worksite. Ensure review of daily attestations for those who come to the worksite by the appropriate supervisor.
- Be available (e.g., on site or by cellphone) during laboratory activities to monitor compliance and answer questions and concerns as needed.
- Report safety concerns to a supervisor (e.g., PI, department administrator) or directly to EH&S according to unit- and site-specific plans.

Attestation requirements

Updated symptoms list:

- A new fever (100.4 F or higher) or a sense of having a fever
- A new cough that you cannot attribute to another health condition
- New shortness of breath that you cannot attribute to another health condition
- A new sore throat that you cannot attribute to another health condition
- New muscle aches that you cannot attribute to another health condition or that may have been caused by a specific activity, such as physical exercise
- New respiratory symptoms, such as sore throat, runny nose/nasal congestion or sneezing, that you cannot attribute to another health condition
- New chills or repeated shaking with chills that you cannot attribute to another health condition
- New loss of taste or smell that you cannot attribute to another health condition

Workday attestation: The updated list of symptoms has been included in the Workday attestation tool. The Workday attestation tool is to be used for employees reporting to non-clinical sites of work who have not attested on that day within the clinical environment.

Catalyst attestation. All individuals coming to the worksite must attest. If an individual is not represented in Workday (e.g., 499 students), they can attest through the Catalyst tool updated with this new list of symptoms.

Visitors. Visitors include vendors, equipment repair personnel, and trainees, staff, or faculty from other labs or administrative units. *In order to facilitate contact tracing, should that become necessary, all visits by individuals not usually present on site and not otherwise attesting must be recorded in a log that is maintained for at least four weeks after the visit. **At a minimum, visitor logs should include name, contact information (email and telephone number), date of visit, time in/out, and attestation that the visitor is free of symptoms of COVID-19.*** It is ideal for visitors to provide their own pen, but a pen may be provided if gloves are required for its use or the pen will be disinfected after each use. Visitor log data must be retained for at least 4 weeks and may be used in contact tracing in cases where researchers are diagnosed with COVID-19.

Undergraduates enrolled in 499 courses and paid as hourly employees may be designated critical personnel. Because undergraduates enrolled in 499 courses are not able to self-attest in Workday, a Catalyst survey or other form of daily self-attestation must be performed each day they come into work. Hourly employees (including undergraduates paid hourly) will use the Workday system to self-attest. Undergraduate volunteers are not permitted in labs as they cannot be designated critical personnel.

Procedure masks or cloth face coverings are required in all public spaces (e.g. hallways and restrooms) and *whenever coming within 6 feet of another person is possible.* Cloth face coverings are not a substitute for personal protective equipment (PPE) required for specific tasks with specific PPE requirements [Guidance on Workplace COVID-19 Risk Level and Selection of PPE](#) can be found on [EH&S's COVID-19 Health and Safety Resources](#) webpage. Procedure masks required for specific tasks (e.g., BSL2 work) are to be properly disposed of upon the completion of those tasks as per EH&S requirements.

Purchases of cloth face coverings, procedure masks in limited quantities, and plastic face shields may be made with a budget number from:

- Health Sciences Building: Biochemistry Stores, HSB J014,

<https://depts.washington.edu/biowww/pages/biochem-stores.shtml>

- SLU: order via sluinfo@uw.edu and pick up at C Building reception desk,
- Ninth and Jefferson Building (Harborview Medical Center Campus): order via sluinfo@uw.edu with receipt on site coordinated with Nicole Gibran nicoleg@uw.edu.

Close-in work requiring less than 6 feet between individuals may be allowed in some very limited instances. Requests for close-in work must include a written safety plan approved by the COVID-19 Supervisor, PI and department chair of designee, who will record their approval by signature and date on the plan. Instructions for safety plans for close-in work can be found on the COVID update Huddle page (<https://huddle.uwmedicine.org/news/covid-19-updates>) under the “Research” heading.