

Physics department guidelines and plans for the initial phase of reopening laboratory research.

(Adapted from a document prepared by the Chemistry department and used with permission)

Overview: On-site research on all OSU campuses and facilities is currently limited to only critical functions. Those not staffing or accessing such functions are to stay home. Governor Brown’s directive remains in place at the time of writing and is in place until at least June 13th, 2020. OSU has issued a “[Keep Researching](#)” statement suggesting a phased return to activities could subsequently commence, and a form to be submitted to the Research Office for each PI to reopen operations on campus. The present document attempts to envisage what such a phased return looks like for on-site research activities in the Physics Department. It takes no stance on whether or when a return to research should occur and is guided by the values and principles listed at <https://covid.oregonstate.edu/keep-researching>.

This document describes processes to maximize the productivity of research labs while minimizing COVID exposure risk to the lab workers, and maximizing ability to report and recover in the event of an outbreak. The Research Office & OSU are working with the Oregon Health Authority and the Governor to get the research operations at OSU, UO, OHSU, and PSU opened, which will likely require reporting. This document therefore also suggests infrastructure and practices to provide information for reporting (*i.e.* contact tracing). These guidelines were written to address “Research Stage 1” and are subject to change to improve efficiency and safety, and to address changes in “Research Stage 2.” Feedback and input are welcome and should be directed to Janet Tate or any member of the committee.

Department working group: Physics has a working group (current members listed in header) to liaise with the college and to help department PIs prepare the [necessary plans](#) to reestablish research activities.

Most activities should remain ‘at home’: Any work that can be done from home, should be done from home. Meetings of all kinds - research groups, committees, defenses and orals, one-on-one - should remain virtual. Lab workers will continue to do computer work at home. Computers brought home for the isolation period should remain at home. Faculty whose work requires specialized on-site equipment or attending to instrumentation should sign up for on-site work shifts just like their lab workers.

Personal responsibility: Ultimately, our community is only as safe as its individuals. Remaining productive and employed during this time is a privilege, and members of the Physics department shall not endanger this opportunity. Lab workers will sign a pledge regarding their individual responsibility (see *Research Resumption Pledge*) and commitment to the health of their community, and commitment to proactive and effective research time. Ultimately, lab work during the pandemic is opt-in only. Lab workers who are uncomfortable with social contact during this time should plan alternative arrangements with their supervisors.

Required training & adherence: We will follow the guidelines established by the CDC and summarized by OSU EH&S at <https://ehs.oregonstate.edu/coronavirus>. All lab workers must take the “Pandemic, slowing the spread” training module (<https://oregonstate.bridgeapp.com/learner/programs/94>), and pass the test before returning to work and review other available modules on the /coronavirus EHS page.

Building occupancy and shift work: A survey in mid-May 2020 indicated that about 25 individuals in the Physics department will require regular research lab access during the initial phase, plus 7 PIs on an occasional basis.

- We will target 1 person per room if at all possible, and 1 person/300 sq. ft in larger rooms.
- We recommend work shifts each week day to minimize density of occupants and reduced work hours to minimize time spent in the building with unknown air flow patterns. At least 30 minutes between shifts is desirable, so the room is unoccupied and air exchange occurs. A “get-in-get-data-get-out” culture should

be established with all analysis done at home.

- PIs will create and utilize a mechanism of communication with workers to ensure that someone knows they have started and completed a shift (e.g. a Slack channel).
- If rooms are to be used for GTAs during summer teaching activities either in Physics or other occupants of Weniger Hall, the overall numbers of researchers may have to be accordingly reduced if hallway & bathroom traffic is increased. We will revisit as summer progresses.

Signup sheets to document and monitor shifts, instrument use, and person-to-person contact:

Signup sheets are to track workers' exposure if they become infected with the COVID virus. This process also encourages faculty and lab workers to plan and prioritize work to maximize efficiency of individuals and the group.

Process: Each group will create an online signup sheet/calendar, and save weekly history, which can be available to others in the event of a COVID illness or outbreak. Lab workers will sign up for shifts, providing a BRIEF work plan for the shift, including what they intend to do, what labs/buildings they will visit to use which instruments. The scheduling should be planned on a weekly basis. With this information, lab workers can ask colleagues to take care of brief jobs (e.g. turn off an instrument), rather than coming in themselves. Lab workers should budget time for cleaning and leave if they finish earlier than planned.

- Each lab will have written procedures for safely shutting down equipment in the shortest possible time in the event that an outbreak occurs (2 day-maximum in stage 1). All lab members should be familiar with these procedures.

Instrumentation within the physics department: For instruments owned, operated and maintained by physics department faculty, we will use and expand our existing signup sheets to schedule time. This eliminates unnecessary contact between lab workers, and facilitates documentation and contact tracing in the event of an outbreak. Lab workers will sign up for ample time to allow cleaning all touched surfaces after use. We shall commit to hygienic practices when using all equipment shared by others.

Instrumentation in user facilities: User facilities commonly accessed by Physics researchers include staffed (e.g. MASC cleanroom in Owen Hall) and unstaffed facilities (e.g. McIntyre Spectroscopy Lab, Graham spectrometer, Rorrer Raman Microscopy in Gleeson Hall). For unstaffed facilities, users must contact the PI most closely associated with the facility. For the staffed facilities, the facility director will issue guidelines, which should be made available. *Lab workers will strictly adhere to their guidelines.*

Taking breaks: Taking breaks is an important part of safe lab work. Taking breaks outside is encouraged. If they maintain safe distances between people, lab workers can use their shared office spaces to rest, drink water and consume food prepared at home, although it is recommended to avoid eating at work.

- Strict measures for sanitizing after food consumption should be followed (see janitorial service and cleaning guidelines).
- The fridge in the grad break room is off limits except for medicines.
- Loitering is discouraged.

Visits for instrument setup, repair and maintenance: This will be handled by the PI in charge and the instrument company, following OSU policies guidelines and the company guidelines. These visits should be noted on the weekly signup sheet and are counted in total building occupancy. The maintenance engineers should sign the personal health declaration.

Entrance/exit designations:* All entrances/exits in Weniger are locked. Building keys will allow entrance and crash bars function for exit. Ensure that doors latch upon exiting.

- We recommend streamlined foot traffic. The southwest and northeast stairwells should be designated as UP stairwells and the northwest and southeast stairwells be designated as DOWN stairwells. At the southwest entrance, the southern door should be ENTRANCE only and the northern door EXIT only.

*These building policies are suggested but can be implemented only after consultation with OSU authorities and other building users. Information will be forthcoming if it is possible to implement them.

Protocol and physical controls for common use spaces: To minimize touch points, some interior doors may be propped open Monday through Friday 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. It is the responsibility of whoever opened the door to close the door when they leave. All labs should have a spray bottle of hand and surface sanitizer inside all lab doors that cannot be propped open. Bathroom use should be one person at a time for bathrooms with multiple stalls. Lab workers shall not enter unless unoccupied. If the door is not open, use a “wait-until-clear” protocol, by asking loudly at the entrance if someone is present in a room or bathroom.

- Use easily removable & reusable gloves or some other device (plastic tubing) to open doors if you move frequently between rooms. Clean and reuse gloves where possible.
- Elevator occupancy should never be more than one individual. Elevators use should be reserved for transporting large or wheeled items such as gas cylinders, and for people with conditions that make using stairs difficult.
- Lab workers should have a rough idea of airflow patterns in their labs and where makeup air comes from.

Janitorial service and cleaning guidelines: The building manger will request thorough daily cleaning/disinfection nightly of common use areas including bathrooms, stairwell, elevators, hallways. Touchpoints like doorknobs should be cleaned twice per day.

- Every lab and used office space will have a supply of hand sanitizer and surface cleaner (Chemstores has free alcohol sanitizer). *Lab workers will thoroughly clean common use ‘hot spots’ before leaving at the end of their shift.* This especially includes keyboards, mice and computer desks of instruments, surfaces around instruments, desks or tables where they spent extensive time. Planning work will include time for cleaning.
- Contribute to general building cleanliness and welfare by adhering to posted signs to clean doorknobs, maintain distance, wash hands *etc.*

General guidelines for PPE and social distancing: Lab workers should follow all the guidelines relevant for public places, also reviewed in the [EH&S training modules](#) and [OSU face covering policy](#). The lab is responsible for providing PPE.

- **Workers will wear masks or face coverings**, except for extended *solo* work and especially when communicating with others, in hallways, *etc.* Chemstores sells masks for labs and individuals who don’t have them. Lab workers should launder cloth coverings frequently or dispose of single-purpose masks.
- As always, lab workers will continue to wear labcoats and gloves for biological and chemical safety and to protect sensitive equipment if applicable, and should wear gloves when using shared equipment.
- Each lab group will organize shifts to maximize distance and time between lab workers.

Guidelines for working with people. PIs will work with the Physics local R2R committee to request College and Research Office permission for workers to be on-site. FRAs, post-docs and other independent workers have priority over workers who need supervision or oversight (e.g. beginning graduate students, some undergraduates and visiting researchers) and trained workers only are allowed in Research Stage 1.

- Lab workers who must work in pairs shall be diligent in social distancing guidelines whenever possible.

Both parties must be comfortable with the arrangement, and be especially vigilant about monitoring personal health. Wearing masks is mandatory when working in pairs.

Reporting illness. If lab workers become ill with COVID-like symptoms, they will stay home and report immediately to the PI, who informs the department head who informs appropriate OSU authorities. Individuals in contact with a sick person should self-quarantine for 14 days. This should be traceable from group work calendars, instrument signup sheets and workers are encouraged to maintain a daily log of contacts including personal ones, and also to have a tracing app (see below). If lab workers have a cold or flu, they should stay home.

If an outbreak occurs: If a lab worker is reported or presumed infected with COVID, everyone in the department will be asked to place work and instruments in safe mode and vacate the labs immediately. A time lapse of 72 hours (3 days) plus disinfection of affected spaces must occur before anyone can resume work.

Contact tracing Apps: Lab workers are recommended to install ONE free smartphone App, *e.g.*, NOVID, which uses ultrasound to monitor the distances between students, reports positive cases to users, given the positive students check the box after tests, and sends automatic notices to students who were around the positive cases. NOVID claims to protect the privacy of users, and seems to be set up to do so.

Research resumption pledge: All lab workers, including PIs, will be asked to sign the pledge on the next page. PIs will maintain records.

Research resumption pledge

By signing my name below, I am committed to the following practices and priorities for research resumption at Oregon State University during the COVID-19 pandemic.

My top priorities are

- Doing my part to ensure my health and safety, and the health of my coworkers, and my community, and
- Forwarding my research without jeopardizing the health and safety of my coworkers and community.

I will abide by the guidelines set forth by Governor Kate Brown and the governance of Oregon, during the current phase of reopening (<https://govstatus.egov.com/reopening-oregon>).

If I partake in an event or activity that goes against the current guidelines to avoid spread of COVID (for example large gatherings without social distancing and/or face coverings) or find myself in a situation where I do not feel safe against possible contamination, I will not come to campus for 14 days, while self-quarantining and monitoring my health.

Further, each day, by scheduling and being present on campus for work, I am declaring that ...

- I am not ill. I have not had a fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, cough, shortness of breath, or other respiratory problems, sore throat, new loss of sense of smell or taste, or unusual headache, within the past 10 days.
- I have not been in close contact with anyone who has a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19 or is awaiting results of a COVID-19 test, within the past 14 days.
- I have not cared for someone who has a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19 or is awaiting results of a COVID-19 test, within the past 14 days.
- I have not tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 10 days.
- If I have been diagnosed with COVID-19, I have been symptom-free without fever reducing medication for at least 72 hours and at least 10 days have passed since the onset of my illness.
- If I develop any of the above symptoms or receive a confirmation that I am COVID-19 positive after working in an OSU laboratory, I will promptly inform my PI who will inform the department head and appropriate OSU authorities.

NAME:

OSU research role (postdoc, graduate student, faculty research assistant or associate, etc.):

DATE: