
SOG for PPE guidelines during the Phased return to research at UNTHSC during the COVID -19 Pandemic

Purpose: Use of an appropriate ensemble of personal protective equipment (PPE) may be necessary to protect against potential exposures to COVID 19 and other hazards in the laboratory. In all cases, PPE is a supplement to and not a substitute for feasible engineering and administrative controls. In the current situation with COVID 19, the CDC recommends that everyone should wear a cloth face cover in public places, for example at the grocery store or in the research laboratory. Under the current CDC guidelines for COVID-19, masks (cloth/surgical) and gloves are required in low risk environments. If you are not involved in COVID -19 research, your research laboratory is classified as a low risk environment according to CDC guidelines. Continue to keep at least 6 feet of space between yourself and others. A cloth face cover or other approved mask is not a substitute for social distancing. A cloth face cover is meant to protect other people in case you are infected.

Scope: Applies to all research personnel who are part of the phased return to work in research labs

Responsibility: Everyone who works in the laboratory must understand and practice proper PPE usage regardless of their job or activities in the lab.

Materials:

Cloth Mask/ Surgical Mask (mandatory under current CDC guidelines)

Gloves (mandatory)

Lab coat (mandatory for wet-lab activities)

Safety glasses (mandatory when doing bench work)

Face shield (Optional)

N-95 (may be part of a mandatory ensemble to allow for work that does not allow for social distancing)



Other PPE may be recommended to use your designated research after a risk assessment is conducted.

Procedure:

- Everyone should wear a cloth face cover when they are on campus. You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
- Cloth face coverings should not be placed on anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- Do NOT use a N95 meant for a healthcare worker unless it is part of a PPE ensemble approved by the PI and the institution AND the worker has a current fit test for that specific mask on file. If an N95 is issued without a fit test make sure it is clear that the N95 does not provide the wearer protection from infection but rather others protection from the wearer.
- Continue to keep a distance of at least 6 feet between yourself and others. The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing.

Guidelines for a Cloth Face Covering:

- Cloth face coverings should fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face and be secured with ties or ear loops
- Include multiple layers of fabric
- Allow for breathing without restriction
- Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

Reference:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/healthcare-facilities/316157-A_FS_KeepingPatientsSafe.pdf