
SOG for Social distancing on campus- PPE for protecting from exposure to COVID-19- During the Phased return to research at UNTHSC in regard to recent events concerning COVID -19

Purpose: COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact (within about 6 feet) for a prolonged period. Spread happens when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, and droplets from their mouth or nose are launched into the air and land in the mouths or noses of people nearby. The droplets can also be inhaled into the lungs. Recent studies indicate that people who are infected but do not have symptoms likely also play a role in the spread of COVID-19. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes. However, this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. COVID-19 can live for hours or days on a surface, depending on factors such as sun light and humidity. Social distancing helps limit contact with infected people and contaminated surfaces.

Although the risk of severe illness may be different for everyone, anyone can get and spread COVID-19. Everyone has a role to play in slowing the spread and protecting themselves, their family, and their community.

Scope: Applies to all research personnel who will be conducting research at UNTHSC.

Responsibility: Everyone who works in the laboratory should understand and practice social distancing regardless of their job or activities in the lab.

Procedure to practice social or physical distancing

- Stay at least 6 feet (2 meters) from other people
 - Do not gather in groups
 - Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings (> 10 people)
- 1. Minimizing the number of researchers coming to work at a given day. No more than 1 person in a lab. For open lab space area PI should provide a plan to assure that the researchers can practice social distancing of at least 6'. EH&S will review and approve the plan.**



Some measures that can be taken to achieve this goal is given below.

- Implement alternating work schedules to meet the demands of the laboratory while limiting close contact with others (and still ensuring the safety of the work partner).
- **Always wear a cloth mask or disposable surgical mask as an additional protective measure in accordance with CDC guidelines.**
- Maintain an updated list of everyone who works in the lab or research facility. Include home and cell phone numbers and ensure access to the information even while away from the lab. Create a phone tree or email group to facilitate emergency communication amongst lab researchers and staff. Share the list with EH&S and Campus PD.
Create a signup sheet for each shift and display the sheet outside your laboratory.
- Cross-train research staff to fill in for others who may be out sick or unable to come to work. Consider documenting either via video or written documentation critical step-by- step instructions.
- Identify work that can be done from home or remotely, such as data analysis.
- Avoid in-person meetings. Use remote work technologies such as Zoom and Microsoft team.
- Ensure that all staff working during phased return to work process have filled out the daily questionnaire and completed online training module.
- Do not perform high-risk procedures alone. When working alone is necessary, exercise maximum caution. Notify colleagues of your schedule when working alone for an extended period of time.
- Ensure that high-risk materials (radioactive, biohazards, chemicals) are secured.
- Take turns to use common facilities like elevators, restrooms and breakrooms. Only one person should be present at a time. Use “in use” signage for such facilities if needed.
- Use caution to avoid cross traffic at the corridors. If needed use one direction traffic.
- While taking stairs, please maintain the 6 feet distance.
- In any emergency evacuation try to maintain 6’ but the priority in that moment is to get out quickly.



Always check latest information about the COVID-19 updates at UNTHSC webpage.

Reference:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>

https://www.osha.gov/Publications/influenza_pandemic.html#steps_employers_can_take

https://www.ehs.harvard.edu/sites/ehs.harvard.edu/files/Lab%20Prep%20for%20COVID19_0.pdf