

Return to Work: Phase 1
Policies and Procedures for MSU Biochemistry Building
Draft May 19, 2020 (currently being reviewed by MSU OSVPRI)

This protocol is being written to enable all personnel to conduct maintenance work, bench work, and work with animals, plants, cells, bacteriophage, and microbes safely in the Biochemistry Building while there is still a risk of contracting the virus causing COVID-19 from co-workers and other people in the building. This document should be taken in the context of university-level guidelines (<https://vp.research.msu.edu/coronavirus/research-reactivation>). This protocol should be considered phase 1 of a staged return to work procedure following COVID-19 and might change as conditions warrant or require. Activities in all laboratories of the building are limited to those that can only be done on campus. That is, if your work can be done at home, stay at home. ***Nobody should be compelled to come to work during phase 1.*** This document does not apply to research field sites on campus or remote locations. Separate guidelines and policies for other sites will need to be developed in coordination with the appropriate administrators of the facilities.

The Biochemistry Building is visited daily by BMB personnel, animal facility personnel, IPF personnel, RTSF personnel and occasional users of shared equipment/facilities. The guidelines below apply to anybody that will enter the building during phase 1. BMB has already acquired adequate supplies of PPE and sanitizing products to place at various stations in the building.

I. The guiding principles of these Policies and Procedures include the following:

1. The Biochemistry Building has remained operational during the shutdown, equipment has been routinely monitored and repaired as needed by essential personnel, and the building is ready for resumption of work. It is understood that the bathrooms and common areas are cleaned daily by the janitorial staff in addition to measures described below upon return to work in phase 1.
2. There is currently no COVID-19 bench research being conducted in the Biochemistry Building.
3. The risk of going back to work in the lab with other colleagues includes contracting the virus causing COVID-19 from another contagious person by aerosol or contaminated surfaces. Keep in mind, a contagious person may not have symptoms.
4. Precautions need to be added on top of existing lab safety protocols and the new precautions do not diminish them.
5. Training on new policies and procedures is required for all those returning to work and building access may not be granted until training has been documented (see Section V). Everyone has to acknowledge reading this document with these new guidelines. Additional training requirements have to be in line with MSU policies.
6. This protocol will remain binding until Michigan/Ingham County Health Department/MSU or other circumstances allow for or require modifications. Changes to this protocol will be widely distributed to all building occupants and their supervisors by email and postings will be made at the entrances of the building.

- II. Building access:** Key card access will be limited to only those faculty, staff and students who have been trained in, acknowledge the *Return to Work Post COVID-19* policies and procedures in this document, acknowledge that they return to work by their own will and understand the risks associated with this. During phase 1, this includes visitors (See Section VI). Key card access may be cut off for anyone found in violation of *Return to Work Post COVID-19* policies and procedures. Do not use shortcuts through another building to get to your workspace.

III. Base Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): The protocol begins at the entrances to the building, although everybody is recommended to wear a mask once getting out of the car in the parking lot:

1. Frequent hand washing and avoiding touching one's face is recommended by the US Center for Disease Control ([CDC](#)) to avoid infection, and MSU follows these recommendations. All entrances of the building will have a station with hand sanitizer. Hands must be cleaned upon entering the building using this sanitizer and washed first thing when entering your lab space using soap and water for 20 s. Hands should be washed at regular intervals during the work period to minimize the potential infection.
2. Masks that cover your mouth and nose must be worn at all times in the building. (Masks will be provided; you can also bring your own mask).
3. Safety glasses (or your own glasses) are recommended (but are not mandatory) inside the building, but are mandatory inside the labs. Extra safety glasses will be available. All glasses worn should be cleaned when entering and exiting the building. Cleaning materials will be provided at the entrances.
4. Cell phones must be bagged in Ziplock bags provided at the entrances. Bagging does not impede function of the cell phone but will help prevent contamination while on the premises. Bags can be disposed at the entrances in plastic lined receptacles upon leaving.

IV. General Practices

1. Until otherwise indicated, everybody entering the Biochemistry Building must complete the [Ingham County Health](#) form.
2. During phase 1, no eating anywhere in the building is allowed. You can eat if necessary, in your car or the garden if social distancing is maintained. The shared lunchrooms, microwaves, food fridges etc. will not be available. Drinking is allowed using beverages that you bring with you from home. Drinking fountains are closed including the refill stations. Exceptions because of health conditions will be considered by special request to the Chair.
3. Stay at home if you have an elevated temperature or other COVID-19 symptoms as described in the [health screening form](#).
4. Undergraduate students should not be in the building unless they are paid employees who are performing a critical function of the research. Their presence in the building needs to be approved by the Chair, in addition to meeting all the other necessary requirements.
5. We will encourage all Spartan Marketplace and P-card orders to use central receiving as the delivery address. Items will be delivered there and moved by Central receiving personnel (trained to access BCH) to the mailbox area in the 2nd floor of BCH.
6. Upon entrance into the building start wearing a mask and clean eyewear.
7. Wear gloves only at times you would usually wear gloves in the lab according to EHS recommendations. MSU EHS has determined wearing gloves in common spaces may increase the risk of spreading the virus. It is best to follow for frequent hand washing for 20 s with soap and warm water and avoiding touching one's face as recommended by the [CDC](#).
8. Wash your hands with soap and warm water before leaving the bathroom. Use a paper towel to open the door to exit the bathroom. Only one person can occupy the bathroom at any given time.
9. At 7 am and 1 pm a designated person will walk through the building and disinfect common touch surfaces such as doorknobs, handrails, elevator buttons, bathroom surfaces, etc. using a CDC-approved disinfectant solution.

10. Each lab should designate a person to clean common touch surfaces in the lab at the beginning of each shift, including doorknobs, light switches, faucets, general use equipment.

V. Training Team: A training team that represent the several stakeholders for the Biochemistry Building has been put together. Training will include policies and procedures, understanding the laboratory and building plans, scenario training, who is responsible for disinfection, decontamination protocols and daily staffing. Key card building access will be contingent on having taken a group training session with the Training Team via video conference. As necessary, a member of the Training Team will be available on-site to provide additional training, when required. Members of the Training Team will also be involved in the review of laboratory plans for safe return to research by PIs.

VI. Non-laboratory personnel

1. During phase 1, clerical staff that can work from home should continue to do so.
2. File the [daily health report](#) before going to the building.
3. Facility coordinators, BMB Stores personnel and other non-laboratory personnel that must be on site must keep physical distances of 6 ft or more between co-workers at all times (less than one individual per 150 sq ft of office space)
4. External service providers must first contact Nichole Daly (dalyn@msu.edu, a member of the Training Team) to gain access to the building and be made aware of the requirements while in the building. A log should be kept of all external service providers visiting the building, and if visiting a lab or other research space, they must also be signed into the logbooks for each lab.
5. MSU visitors wishing to use Biochemistry Building facilities or equipment must be subjected to the same training as other members of the building. Access to the building will be granted only after the appropriate training has been completed.
6. Any visitors must be counted towards the maximum number of people in any given space.
7. Everybody in the building must wear relevant PPE at all times (See above).

VII. Laboratory personnel

1. To prevent new virus infections, **awareness is key.**
 - a. Maintain physical distances of 6 ft or more between co-workers at all times (less than one researcher per 200 sq ft of lab space – the load factor is larger than for offices because researchers will move around to use various lab equipment pieces) and no more than one per bay/office
 - b. Maintain physical distances between all people coming to and from work
 - c. Monitor your health (temperature, etc.)
 - d. Wear relevant PPE at all times (See above)
 - e. Each person must enter the building using their own key card to provide a record of people in the building at any given time. This information will help contact tracing if necessary.
 - f. Each lab also needs to have a digital log of who is working each day in the lab to allow for contact tracing if needed. A template is currently being developed and will be made available to all PIs.
2. File the [daily health report](#) before going to the building.
3. Minimize the transport of items between work and home
4. Leave most personal items at home—transport only essential items between work and home (e.g., water, key card, wallet, phone).

5. Avoid bringing your computer to work. Similarly, if your computer is already at work, avoid bringing it home. If you need to bring it, disinfect it. Similarly, disinfect a shared computer in the lab before and after use.
6. Place your phone in a ziploc bag—only unwrap your phone when exiting the building. Bags will be provided at each entrance.
7. Headsets and earbuds should not be used in the building.

VIII. Laboratory practices

A. Minimize time in the building

- a. Anything that can be done at home, you should do at home.
- b. Only go to the building if you are doing work that must be done at the laboratory. Computational research should be done from home. Whenever possible, PIs should interact regularly with their personnel in a manner that maximizes the safety of all parties, while maintaining optimal communications and support.
- c. If you finish your tasks before the end of the shift—go home.
- d. If your task for the day is minor, ask a colleague who needs to go to the building to complete the task for you (be reasonable).
- e. Be good teammates and help each other out by completing simple tasks for others so they don't have to come in.
- f. Have a clear plan for the day and write up protocols for the day's work before coming to the building—only be in the building to execute the task.
- g. If you bring notes, protocols or other paper items from home leave them in the lab if possible—minimize what you bring to and from the lab.
- h. As much as possible, put all data in the cloud for accessing later at home.
- i. Don't spend time socializing in the building.

B. Time shifts and teams

- a. Social distancing requires that we limit the number of people working in individual laboratories and common spaces during phase 1 of the return to work plan.
- b. Each PI is responsible for setting up a weekly on-line schedule for each lab, team or group where people sign up to work in specific lab spaces during specific days or shifts. The lab should have a digital attendance log (to avoid sharing pens and paper) for each day (see above). The number of people per space should be determined by each lab and should be capped at a small number per laboratory space (following distancing guidelines using a minimum area of 6 foot radius to estimate space required approximately 200 sq. ft. per person for lab space because of moving around, and no more than one person per bench bay; and one person per office).
- c. Minimize travel within the building—try to stay in your lab space as much as possible.
- d. Guidelines for spacing of people in labs — 6-foot minimum at all times, not more than one person per bench bay, not more than one person per office
- e. Have a designated person clean common touch surfaces in the lab at the beginning of each shift, including doorknobs, light switches, faucets, general use equipment.
- f. Common surfaces will be disinfected by assigned personnel at regular 5-hour schedules, (e.g., 8 am; 1 pm; 6 pm).

C. Work in the lab and office space

- a. Frequently wash your hands with soap and warm water for 20 s. Avoid touching your face.

- b. Always wear a mask in labs, offices and public areas of the building such as hallways, staircases, elevators, growth chambers - label the mask with your name and take it home with you.
- c. Leave glasses and mask on when using all equipment including microscopes.
- d. Wash your hands for 20 s with soap and warm water after restroom use. Remember to open the door using a paper towel.
- e. Avoid in person meetings and use Zoom or Teams. Conference and classrooms rooms will be closed.
- f. Use of the elevator is discouraged. For those that need to use it, the elevators should be used by one person at the time. Appropriate signs will be placed as reminders.

D. Laboratory equipment

- a. Disinfect all equipment including shared computers before and after use using a CDC-approved disinfectant solution (wipe down with a 70% alcohol solution).
- b. Disinfect all handheld devices (e.g. pens, pencils, pipettors using a 70% alcohol solution).

E. Shared research spaces and equipment

- a. Shared research spaces (tissue culture rooms, autoclave rooms, etc) will be subjected to the same physical distancing restrictions as other spaces – maximum one person per 200 sq ft of space, and a minimum of 6 ft between individuals at all times.
- b. When applicable, an electronic reservation and logbook will be available for shared research spaces
- c. Shared research spaces should have a sign on the door indicating maximum occupancy, and whether the room is occupied or not.
- d. Shared equipment in individual labs will be accessible by appointment with the PI or appointed person, and the visitor needs to complete the digital attendance log of the lab.

F. Monitoring to ensure compliance

- a. While policing each other is not in the culture of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, compliance will be monitored periodically by the chair by walking through the labs and building (with the appropriate PPE). Attention will focus primarily on:
 - i. Ensuring appropriate physical distance is maintained in all spaces
 - ii. Ensuring that lab occupancy does not exceed what was agreed upon
 - iii. Ensuring the use of PPE
 - iv. Ensuring that everybody in the building has gone through the training
- b. Minor violations will be communicated to the individuals in writing with copy to the PI. Repetitive offenders will be asked to take the training again before being allowed back into the building.

G. Preparedness for ramp-down as necessary

- a. Each lab should have in place a procedure in place to ramp down research activities again, if required. Such a plan should include a list of essential personnel and duties that will need to continue to go to the building.

Questions or concerns about this document, and reports of unsafe behaviors can be directed to the BMB Chair (Erich Grotewold, grotewol@msu.edu)

Helpful links

- Cloth mask guidance: https://ehs.msu.edu/_assets/docs/fact-sheets/cloth-face-covering-fact-sheet.pdf
- OSHA guidance on preparing workplaces: <https://ehs.msu.edu/news/2020-04-19-osa.html>
- COVID-19 Cleaning guidelines: <https://ehs.msu.edu/news/2020-03-19-covid-19-cleaning.html>
- CDC poster and communication materials: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc>
- CDC Communities, Schools and Workplaces: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html>
- CDC Reopening Document: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/pdf/Reopening_America_Guidance.pdf