Duke University policies for employees approved to return to research laboratories
Phase III of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic
May 13, 2020

Overview: The response to the COVID-19 epidemic at Duke, like many of our national peers, can be categorized into four general phases:

- **Phase 1:** Ramping down of essential activities, continuation of clearly relevant research into COVID-19, and execution of the shelter in place order.
- **Phase 2:** Performance of time-sensitive research whose pause would seriously damage future viability of the research program.
- **Phase 3:** Gradual, monitored restarting of some research and careful expansion.
- **Phase 4:** Beginning of a return to normal operations with permanently enhanced safety guidelines.

We describe below a set of general requirements in research-intensive buildings as we begin the transition from phase 2 to phase 3. While we hope to move forward and bring more researchers back to campus, we reserve the right to return to phase 2 or even 1 if the situation dictates this or to relocate or remove employees as needed. Our guiding principle is and will continue to be to mitigate health and safety risks to our employees and students based on the advice of health care professionals and other experts.

To reduce the risks of employees potentially being exposed to SARS-CoV-2 in the workplace or exposing others, we aim to keep the density of our workforce as low as possible at any given time and to create a balanced daily plan that maintains safe distances between employees. The most important three elements that will help keep you and others safe are: (i) wearing a face covering; (ii) regularly washing your hands; and (iii) keeping your distance from other people. Compliance with the instructions outlined below, as well as those from your supervisor and administration is required for continued access; violation may result in the immediate revocation of building access privileges and/or other appropriate disciplinary action.

No two laboratories are alike. The directives listed here describe approaches that were devised in collaboration with experts in the area of infectious disease control and have been shared with our peers across the country. However, we urge you to collaborate with us to continually improve the safety of your workplace. For example, your work may involve the frequent use of shared equipment, such as a microscope: what extra cleaning precautions could you take to further minimize the risk to you and your coworkers? Perhaps the route to your laboratory could benefit from an additional strategically placed hand washing station? Please reach out to Kevin Smith or Shila Nordone in Durham and Rebecca Smith in DUML if you wish to discuss safety measures for your specific lab/location. In order to reduce our risks as much as possible, this must be a partnership.
General Principles

1. If you believe that you are at a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 and you are concerned about reporting to work or if you wish to seek a reasonable accommodation under the ADA, you should contact the Disability Management System (DMS) or EOHW to discuss further. You can reach EOHW by calling 919-684-3136, choosing option #2, and asking to speak with a COVID support team provider.

2. Before you leave home for work, you must complete the online EOHW screening checklist. If flagged by the screening checklist, you must contact the COVID-19 hotline at 919-385-0429, as well as your direct supervisor, and act on their instructions.

3. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, have been referred for testing by EOHW or are awaiting test results, you must notify your supervisor immediately, and you may not come to work for any reason until approved by EOHW.

4. Entry to buildings will be regulated and monitored. You will be assigned a window of time, as well as a specific door of entry, to access your building. Your Duke card/badge is required for entry to all research buildings; you may not hold or open exterior doors for any other person.

5. You may not bring visitors, visiting trainees, guests or pets to work.

6. If you don’t do hands-on lab work (for example, if your role is that of a supervisor, PI, department chair or director) and there is no clear need for you to come to campus, you should not do so in the current phase.

7. Face covering must be worn at all times in Duke facilities, including leased buildings, until further notice. This includes: when entering the Duke campus; while at work; and when leaving campus. Disposable masks will be provided. We expect you to use only one clean mask per day.

8. You must wash your hands at regular intervals. Handwashing stations or hand sanitizer dispensers will be installed throughout the buildings, but especially in elevator areas, and common areas. You must wash your hands before entry into the lab and just prior to exit from the lab.

9. When you begin your work in your lab area and when you leave any room in which you have been working at the end of your day at work, you must swab down all work areas with 70% ethanol or equivalent solution. This includes any shared-space location.

10. No more than one person may enter an elevator at a time. Please use the stairs whenever possible and do not congregate in those areas.

11. Convening in groups represents a high risk of viral transmission and is not permitted. No more than one person may be in common/highly frequented areas (e.g., lunchroom, office, bathroom, office, conference room) at a time. You are encouraged to eat meals outside if this is reasonable for your situation, and you may leave the campus for lunch. You should eat alone. If you utilize common areas (break rooms, restrooms, conference areas, etc.), you will need to wipe down surfaces with 70% ethanol or equivalent solution (Virex spray, Hydrogen Peroxide wipes).
12. During your time at work, you should continue to communicate with your colleagues and supervisors by the extensive range of available networking apps, e.g., Zoom, WebEx, Facetime, Livesafe, etc.

13. Time in labs will be scheduled in shifts. It is essential that you vacate the building at or before the designated time, and leave ample time to swab down areas before you exit.

14. Your shift will be coordinated and assigned by your PI who understands your lab and building. All 24 hours of the day can be utilized.

15. If you’re working at a typical lab bench, no other person may also be working in the same bay (i.e., laterally).

16. Nobody may be working in the labs directly in front of you or behind you during your shift.

17. As you work, you should spend the majority of your time at a distance of at least 15 feet from the next person. Although lab activities often will require brief interactions at a smaller distance, your goal is to keep at least 250 square feet around you.

18. For laboratories where the typical number of active lab personnel would exceed this density, the PI will be responsible for determining which individuals will be allowed to work in each designated shift for their group.

19. When you leave work, you must log out using the link provided to you at the time you register.