Research and Creativity COVID-19 Training Supplement

Good Practices to Prevent Transmission of Communicable Disease in the Workspace - 2020-2021 v1

Research and Creativity COVID-19 Training Supplement provides an overview of guidance to minimize the impact of illness caused by the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

To help researchers protect their health in their professional and personal activities, this general guidance is based on the principles of infection control from the New Mexico Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Simple practices to follow are proper handwashing, cleaning and disinfection of items and surfaces, and staying home when you are sick. These practices are among the most effective ways to prevent communicable disease.

Safety Considerations: As with any work with hazards in laboratories and other research environments, individuals must be trained in performing critical tasks and should have access to personal protective equipment necessary to perform these tasks. Hazard-specific and site-specific training is required and is provided by a combination of training given by the Principal Investigator (PI) and by Environmental Health Safety & Risk Management (EHS&RM). Training topics and job hazard assessments are available at *https.safety.nmsu.edu*. This supplemental training does not replace any of the research-specific requirements for training.

New Mexico State University is closely monitoring the state-wide occurrences of COVID-19 and maintains updated information and frequently asked questions at https://nmsu.edu/coronavirus.

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COVID-19 General Information

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in humans and in many different species of animals, including camels, cattle, cats, and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people such as with SARS-CoV, MERS-CoV, and now with SARS-CoV-2.

The 2019 Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) is a highly infectious and fast-spreading illness caused when people are exposed to the virus. Symptoms and their effects can range from mild to severe and in certain cases result in extreme health complications and death.

Symptoms

Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus.** People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Less common: gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

Seek emergency medical care immediately for someone who shows these emergency signs*:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

*This list is not all possible symptoms. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

❖ Video: Signs and Symptoms: When to Seek Care for COVID-19
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWtsm3kYytM

❖ FAQ: How do I seek care?

- NMSU Main Campus: call Aggie Health and Wellness Center at 646-1512 between 8:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-4:30 p.m. for a telehealth appointment.
- For other NM locations: visit https://cv.nmhealth.org/public-health-screening-and-testing/location-details/

Know how COVID-19 spreads

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. Testing is available through medical providers to those who show symptoms or have had contact with someone who is ill, and upon request to your local health department. Contact Aggie Health and Wellness for current information.

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks, which exposes other people nearby to virus when these droplets land in the mouth or nose, are inhaled into the lungs, or are transferred from your hands to your mouth, nose, or eyes after touching a virus-coated surface.
- Some recent studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing fever or other symptoms.

Video: How does COVID-19 spread? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfJSVbQtHsk

Positive cases have been identified in communities across New Mexico. State health officials continue to test, process, monitor and track instances of the virus, and the state of New Mexico has taken proactive, aggressive public health actions to mitigate the spread of the disease.

NMSU is following the Public Health & Executive Orders for the State of New Mexico. Information can be found at https://cv.nmhealth.org/

Control Measures for NMSU Research Sites

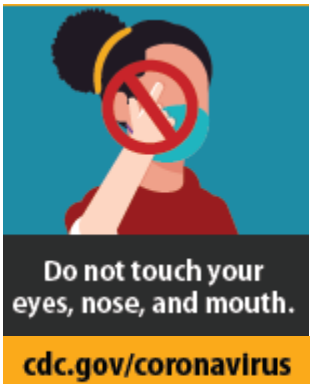
In coordination with university leadership and guidance found at Coronavirus Information - Latest NMSU Updates, researchers should be familiar with basic information about ways to limit the spread of viral illnesses in the workplace.

Continue to follow good practices for health and hygiene given in this section, in addition to your usual good work practices.

NOTE: If the facility or area in which the research occurs has stricter restrictions than outlined in this document, the facility guidance must be followed. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in revocation of onsite privileges.

This supplemental guidance does not replace the need to wear higher-level personal protective equipment (PPE) required by your work activities. Choose PPE such as gloves, safety glasses or face shields, N95 respirator, or other required equipment based on your hazard assessment, the availability of supplies, and specific instructions given by the Research Principal Investigator (PI).

Images: CDC, *Stop the Spread of Germs*



Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette

Increase the number of times you wash your hands. This simple practice is one of the most effective ways to prevent illnesses.

- Remember to wash your hands after removing gloves or other PPE.
- Wash your hands before and after touching your face.
- Wash your hands before leaving a room where there are commonly-touched items.

Hand washing should take 20 seconds or longer.
Rub your hands vigorously under running water, using soap to cover your fingers, nails, palms, and wrists, and then rinse well. Dry your hands on a clean towel or paper towel.
Supervisors: ensure that materials for handwashing are available.

- Video: WHO: How to handwash? With soap and water - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PmVJQUCm4E&feature=emb_rel_end

If soap and water is not available, use hand sanitizer containing 60-70% alcohol (ethyl alcohol or isopropanol), to rub your hands for 20 seconds. Remember to wash with soap and water as soon as practical.

- CDC: https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html

Cover coughs and sneezes

Use a tissue to cover your mouth and nose, and then dispose of the used tissue properly in a waste basket. Wash your hands after touching your face and after handling used tissues.

If you don't have a tissue, use your bent arm to cover your mouth and nose with your sleeve or upper arm, not your hands. You may be asked to put on a face covering or even leave the workplace if coughing or sneezing interferes with the activities.

Physical distancing

Maintain social distancing from others in the workplace. See https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html

Guidelines:

1. Hold all meetings/gatherings, including one-on-one meetings, online or over the phone, as much as possible.
2. Avoid close contact, stay 6 feet (2 meters) away from others. Close contact generally does not include brief interactions, such as walking past others.
3. Limit the number of people that need to be physically present. This should take into account that all individuals must maintain the 6-foot (2 meter) distance from each other. The maximum number of people in the space would be such that all occupants can maintain a 6-foot (2 meter) distance from each other.
4. Do not come to campus if you are sick.

If you have any of the symptoms of COVID-19 such as a cough, fever (recorded >100 degrees F or subjective), or respiratory problems, call the Aggie Health & Wellness Center or your primary care doctor for screening and medical advice, and notify your supervisor that you will not come to the workplace.

Monitor your Health

Research directors/PIs should not require staff to submit personal health information, such as daily temperatures, since the presence or absence of symptoms might not indicate COVID-19 infection.

Personnel should be instructed to self-monitor for fever and other signs and symptoms of COVID-19 daily before coming to work and stay home if they suspect they have been exposed or are ill. If they suspect they have been exposed or are ill, they should report this to their supervisor and Aggie Health and Wellness Center.

Use a daily log-in/log-out page to record attendance and facilitate contract tracing in the event anyone shows signs of illness later.

Supervisors have an obligation to report positive cases of COVID-19 to NMSU Aggie Health & Wellness Center and provide work location information that may be used in contact tracing. An Aggie Health & Wellness medical provider will provide instructions.

Instruct staff to discuss their situation with Aggie Health, and Human Resource Services as needed, to determine when they can return to work.

Travel

Anyone who has traveled outside the state of New Mexico, or in areas of the state where public health advisories have been given, should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms. Please visit https://wellness.nmsu.edu/travel-information/ for more information.

Use of Courtesy Face Coverings and Face Masks

The use of a face covering can slow the transmission of virus between individuals and prevents you from touching your nose and mouth. The use of a courtesy face covering is required in public locations where social distancing cannot be maintained, and NMSU will follow the current executive orders in place in the state of New Mexico for courtesy face coverings in public. As of May 15, “all employees must wear face coverings at all times in the workplace when in the presence of others”. The Director/Principal Investigator will prepare a site-specific COVID-19 Control Plan to describe how the face coverings rule is implemented, including a justification for approval if there is a need for any variation for certain procedures or situations.

Remember, wearing a face covering does NOT take the place of other critical measures such as frequent hand washing and physical distancing measures.

CDC provides additional guidance on cloth and DIY face coverings -- *Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19. (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html)*

The "courtesy" cloth face coverings recommended by CDC are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators, which are critical supplies for healthcare workers and first responders. If your research area normally uses respirators, ensure supplies are available and consult EHS&RM for the required training.

Common Terms Used by the Centers for Disease Control

Cloth face covering: Textile (cloth) covers are intended to keep the person wearing one from spreading respiratory secretions when talking, sneezing, or coughing. **They are not PPE and it is uncertain whether cloth face coverings protect the wearer.** CDC has guidance available on design, use, and maintenance of cloth face coverings.

Facemask: Facemasks are PPE and are often referred to as surgical masks or procedure masks. Use facemasks according to product labeling and local, state, and federal requirements. FDA-cleared surgical masks are designed to protect against splashes and sprays and are prioritized for use when such exposures are anticipated, including surgical procedures. Facemasks that are not regulated by FDA, such as some procedure masks, which are typically used for isolation purposes, may not provide protection against splashes and sprays.

Respirator: A respirator is a personal protective device that is worn on the face, covers at least the nose and mouth, and is used to reduce the wearer's risk of inhaling hazardous airborne particles (including dust particles and infectious agents), gases, or vapors. Respirators are certified by the CDC/NIOSH, including those intended for use in healthcare.

Content source: National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases (May 2, 2020)

Cleaning and Disinfection in the Workspaces

The potential for transmission of COVID-19 from surfaces contaminated with the virus is not fully known. There is evidence that suggests COVID-19 may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of materials. Cleaning and disinfecting of visibly dirty surfaces and

"high-touch" items is a best practice measure for prevention of COVID-19 as well as many other illnesses.

1. The following list of locations and equipment are examples of high-touch areas and surfaces. Use this list as a guide to identify your list of areas that require cleaning at the end of each work shift.
   - Lab doors, handles, and door frames
   - Computer Keyboards
   - Benchtops
   - Equipment handles and latches
   - Equipment controls and touchpads
   - Drawer and cabinet handles
   - Bin and water incubator lids
   - Hand tools, Micro-pipettors
   - Faucet handles and sprayer grips
   - Chemical bottles and lids
   - Chair backs and arm rests
   - Pens, whiteboard markers
   - Phones or touchpads
   - Light switches

2. Develop a list of high-touch locations and equipment in the laboratory. Increased cleaning and sanitation should be given to those areas that will have continued use.

3. Clean and disinfect identified locations on a routine basis. At a minimum, it is recommended that this be when an individual enters the laboratory to begin work and then before leaving the laboratory when work is completed.

   a. Use an EPA-approved disinfectant that is effective against COVID-19. The list of EPA-approved disinfectants can be found at the following link: https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2.

   b. In order to verify a disinfectant is on the list, you can locate the EPA-ID number on the cleaning chemical label. Then do a quick search for that EPA-ID number in the list by using CTRL+F and entering the EPA-ID number.

   c. Pay attention to disinfectant contact times, also listed on the EPA-approved list. Do not assume that a disinfectant works on contact.

   d. Wear appropriate PPE when using cleaning/disinfectant products. This includes safety glasses and chemical-compatible impervious gloves. Reference the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for further information on PPE or any other hazard information. Contact Environmental Health, Safety & Risk Management (EHS&RM) at any time with questions. (575) 646-3327 or ehs@nmsu.edu.

4. Use care with delicate equipment to avoid damage. Cleaning sprays may not be appropriate to use or could damage certain electronic equipment. In these cases an approved disinfectant wipe may be appropriate for more delicate tasks.

- Six Steps for Safe & Effective Disinfectant Use - https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/six-steps-safe-effective-disinfectant-use

In some research areas, it may be appropriate to use alternative disinfectants that are not labeled with EPA registration numbers, in accordance with pre-approved safety protocols; for example, laboratories may use a bleach solution (such as 1/3 cup of bleach added to 1 gallon of water) or 70% alcohol solutions.

Do not mix bleach or other cleaning and disinfection products together. This can cause fumes that may be very dangerous to breathe in. Bleach solutions will be effective for disinfection up to 24 hours.

NOTE: Campus Custodial will continue to clean and disinfect public and common areas such as hallways and restrooms with their disinfection protocols.

Other Safety Considerations

If you suspect that you have **elevated risk factors**, such as those shown in the table below, you can find additional information on the webpage, CDC Guidance on People Who Need to Take Extra Precautions.

If you believe that you are higher risk, please inform your supervisor and follow University notification requirements and procedures for accommodation (i.e. Supervisors, Human Resource Services, Office of Institutional Equity, Student Accessibility Services).

PEOPLE AT HIGHER RISK FOR SEVERE ILLNESS

- People who are immunocompromised
- Older adults
- People with asthma
- People with HIV
- People with liver disease

OTHER POPULATION FACTORS

- People with disabilities
- Pregnancy and breastfeeding
- People Experiencing homelessness
- Ethnic and minority populations
- Other underling medical conditions

As with any laboratory work, individuals must be trained in performing critical tasks and should have access to any personal protective equipment necessary to perform these tasks.

While it is imperative during this time that individuals practice social distancing, **high-risk tasks** should not be performed alone in a laboratory. **High-risk tasks** are procedures that can cause severe harm or loss of life; these must be described in the Experimental Safety Plan or similar hazard communication plan that has been reviewed and approved by EHS&RM.

Research directors and supervisors must provide their personnel with specific instructions for communicating the times that they will be working and ways to stay in contact with other colleagues, using remote technology as necessary.

References and Resources

- CDC Interim U.S. Guidance https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html
- CDC Coronavirus (COVID-19): https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html
- Images: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html
- https://www.newmexico.gov/
- New Mexico Department of Health: https://cv.nmhealth.org/
- Coronavirus Information - Latest NMSU Updates: https://nmsu.edu/coronavirus
- https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html
- https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/six-steps-safe-effective-disinfectant-use
- https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html\

Self-Certification

After you have read this training, complete the electronic form, “Commitment to Public Health Practices” by clicking here or visiting https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=qIfso7ifWEG6j_EbrOHrqt0TvaLvFyZLum2BjqlU_iFUMUxZM0UxM1ZBSkFHUTJTUDJQV1U1TUFZNCQlQCN0PWcu in your browser.

By completing and submitting the electronic “Commitment” form, you are self-certifying that you have read this training guide and agree to participate in on-site activities as described in the “Commitment” statement.