



Office of Laboratory Safety and Environmental Health (OLSEH), IISc, Bangalore

COVID 19 Advisory for Laboratory Personnel/Staff

Dear colleagues and students:

This document outlines OLSEH guidelines to ensure safety while working in the laboratories and research facilities. For guidance on safe practices, please refer to the safety manual available at: <https://olseh.iisc.ac.in/>. Please remember that, it is the responsibility of the Lab managers/faculty to ensure safety in their labs.

General guidelines:

1. Social Distancing:

- a. COVID-19 is readily transmitted from person-to-person when they are in each other's breathing zones.
- b. Strictly maintain six feet of distance between you and your coworkers.
- c. Ask those that are too close to step back– you have the right to calmly and politely ask that of anyone you encounter in your work. If you are asked to yield space, please comply.
- d. Implement a work schedule so that individuals can avoid using the same space or equipment at the same time as other individuals.
- e. Lab cannot be occupied by more than 1 student per 150 sq. ft of **human accessible** lab space [1]. In congested labs, instruments occupy significant footprint. For calculating -occupancy-load, area occupied by instruments must be **excluded**. Only “human-accessible” area should be considered. Research groups should work out a roster scheme for managing lab-time.

2. Personal Protective Equipment:

Individuals working in labs must wear personal protective equipment, potentially more than they are typically included in their standard operating schedule.

Face Coverings (Required)

- a. All lab personnel must wear a face covering (typically, surgical mask or personal cloth mask to cover mouth and nose). The mask type and fit must match or exceed the CDC requirements [2].
- b. In case the lab work requires face-protection PPE that are incompatible with masks, e.g. respirators, then preference must be given to the PPE.

Gloves

- c. If lab-work demands it, personal protective gloves should be worn as per usual

procedures.

- d. If not required for the lab work, gloves are not recommended because they tend to get contaminated and help spread the virus. Instead, frequent hand washing (every 3-4 hours) is recommended. Remember to follow correct washing procedure [3].
- e. If hand washing is not possible, disinfect your hands with hand sanitizer with atleast 60 % of alcohol [4].
- f. Avoid touching your face (or mask) with your gloved, or un-gloved, hands.

3. Infected Waste

- a. Covid infected waste should be treated as hazardous biological waste. Please collect it in yellow bags and contact Health Center for disposal. **DO NOT MIX COVID WASTE WITH GENERAL WASTE.**
- b. Usual lab and general waste can continue to be disposed via SWAMII.



4. Consequences of Non-compliance

Any violation of these Safety Policy or Safety Rules will be handled as follows:

1. For a first-time violation, OLSEH will send a white notice to the responsible Principal Investigator, with a time frame for remedial action based on the severity of the violation.
2. If the violation is not remedied within the timeframe, OLSEH will send a yellow notice to the responsible Principal Investigator with an insistence for immediate action.
3. In case of non-compliance, even after a yellow notice, OLSEH will send a red notice to the offending Principal Investigator, ordering a temporary closure of the laboratory/facility until the violation remedied.
4. In cases of severe violations requiring immediate remedial action, the OLSEH office may directly issue a yellow or red notice.

Emergency Response Directory

Emergency Response Service: 5555/108 (080-2293-5555 from non IISc Phones) Security office: 080-22932400/22932225

Health Centre/ Ambulance: 080-22932227/22932234

Dharmendra Singh, Safety Officer: 080-22933199

M.S Ramaiah hospital: 080-23608888 Snake Rescue volunteer: 080-22932506

Electricity-General: 080-22932206/22932018

Best wishes and stay safe Team OLSEH

References:

- [1] https://www.usfa.fema.gov/coronavirus/planning_response/occupancy_social_distancing.html
- [2] <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
- [3] <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/global-covid-19/handwashing.html>
- [4] <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html>