

## MIP DEPARTMENT COVID-19 SAFETY PLAN

The guidelines for what constitutes essential research were released in the OVCRI mass mail on 3/21, available at <https://massmail.illinois.edu/massmail/5295343.html>. **These guidelines remain in place, until we hear otherwise from the campus.**

Link to return to on-site work mass mail <https://massmail.illinois.edu/massmail/3053578.html>

Please find below some valuable information and advice that will help us all plan our return to lab work eventually:

**1)** The OVCRI is developing guidance on the resumption of research, to be finalized and released when the governor modifies the state stay-at-home orders. The VCRI's office is emphasizing *safety* both for essential research and for resumed research.

[COVID-19 Guidance for Essential Workers](#)

<https://www.drs.illinois.edu/site-documents/SafeConductofEssentialResearchActivities.pdf>

**2) Remote work from home: All work that can be conducted from home must be continued** from home (Bioinformatics/computational work, writing papers, writing thesis, data analysis, etc).

**3) Work schedules:** Work shifts should be arranged so that no more than two individuals are working in a laboratory room (larger than 600 square foot) at any given time. Most of the labs have multiple students in the lab. Each lab should have a set of guidelines to prioritize who would work on which days/time. Staggered working hours are crucial to minimize the number of individuals using common areas such as elevators, stairs, hallways, and restrooms.

**4) Social-distancing measures:** We must ensure that a minimum interpersonal distance of 6 ft. is followed at all times.

**5) Common equipment:** must be cleaned and decontaminated thoroughly before and after each use using 70% isopropanol, an aqueous solution of quaternary-ammonium salts or other CDC-approved decontaminants.

**6) PPE:** masks must be worn at all times in common-use places and any time a distance of 6-ft between individuals cannot be kept when in lab spaces.

**7) Written consent:** Many students/researchers are anxious about their progress and want to return to labs, but there are others who are not comfortable returning to labs. No researcher must be compelled, and it is very important to persuade that their safety is priority. The Department will solicit the list of researchers from PIs, and contact them for consent.

**8) Health questionnaire:** every day, prior to coming to work, individuals must monitor their own health and consider whether they have been exposed to the virus. Anyone feeling ill or having come in contact with someone known to be infected with COVID-19 should seek immediate medical attention and refrain from coming to work.

- 9) Break rooms and seminar rooms:** single-occupancy will be enforced in these spaces. Occupants are responsible for the decontamination of touched surfaces with 70-% isopropanol, an aqueous solution of quaternary-ammonium salts or other CDC-approved decontaminants.
- 10) Meetings:** all meetings must continue to be held online via Zoom or equivalent software.
- 11) Inclusion of lab personnel:** PIs and workgroup leaders are encouraged to lead a collaborative discussion about the design of their plans.