

Guidance for Laboratory, Shop, and Studio Research

Research faculty, support staff, and facility directors have returned to campus, and COVID-19 safety precautions must be in place. Everyone must follow the [Fired Up for Spring guidance](#). Researchers must use caution, practice optimal planning, and be flexible. It is advisable to front load short-term research projects at the beginning of the semester in preparation for a contraction of research activity should it be warranted.

Guiding principles for laboratory, shop, and studio research

1. The safety of the workforce and members of surrounding communities, is the leading priority.
2. A required component of research planning will be reversibility, in case a recurrence of COVID-19 forces another contraction of research activity.
3. Promote remote work to fullest extent possible.

Operating a safe laboratory, shop, and studio

A. Each laboratory/shop/studio must provide all of the following items: safe schedule/plan, individual duty list, and occupancy list that, at all times, maximizes employee spacing and complies with social distancing and all relevant personal protective equipment (PPE). All of the described procedures must be followed and adhered to:

1. This safe plan/schedule should minimize the number of people in each room and all associated spaces (for example, break rooms) at any one time.
2. Distribute a list of duties to be performed by personnel, indicating the location and designated time of day for such duties to be completed.
3. Develop a means of signifying who is present in the lab/shop/studio space at any given time.
4. Faculty should ensure that adequate supervision is provided whenever students are working.

5. Stagger break times to minimize contact between people in rooms. Ensure eating and drinking is not occurring in labs/shops/studios.
6. If you cannot maintain at least 6 feet of social distance, then the schedule will need to be revised and/or reconfigured to achieve this distance.
7. Lab benches may not be 6 feet across, thus plan for work to occur only on one side of the lab bench in those instances or place workers at diagonals and zig zag the work on each side to create 6 feet of social distance.
8. Note that, depending on the research area/experiment, safety guidelines for the specific research project may require more than one person to be present in the room at any one time. Even in this case, the individuals present must maintain a 6-foot separation.
9. Move equipment to create at least 6 feet between users.
10. Tape should be used to mark out 6-foot spaces for high traffic areas or bottlenecks.

B. Masks

1. Appropriate face coverings must be worn per CMU guidance.

C. Maintaining a safe space

1. Suspend all non-essential in-person visitors (including undergraduate students) until further notice.
2. Always wear a face covering unless your research procedures dictate heightened PPE requirements. When not wearing the safety PPE required for your work, reapply your face covering. Proper hand hygiene before and after using any face covering is critical.
3. Wash your hands with soap upon entering and before leaving the lab/shop/studio, and wash them after touching shared accessory devices like phones (use speaker phone if possible).
4. Minimize shared items (pens, notebooks, frequently used reagent bottles, etc.). As much as possible, each person should have their own.
5. All principal investigators must formally assign a daily sanitation role which includes daily cleaning and disinfection procedures including the cleaning of all work benches, door handles & lock keypads, keyboards/mice/desks for shared equipment computers, telephones, printer, cameras, microscopes, control panels, etc.
6. Follow the [ORGS disinfection guidance](#). Provide disinfecting supplies and require workers to wipe down their work stations at least twice daily and between users.
7. Create a plan for shared equipment. This may include detailed scheduling for large open spaces with multiple users.