

## Guidance for Essential Research Activities During Modified Operating Conditions

As the COVID-19 situation continues to unfold, the following guidance is provided with respect to essential research activities conducted under modified operating conditions. All proposed research activities submitted by faculty / PIs have been reviewed and approved by department leadership, College Associate Deans of Research, and a four-person committee, including the Vice President of Research (VPR). The final committee recommendations were approved by the VPR. Any further modifications or requests must be submitted to the VPR for approval.

The intent of essential research activities during modified operating conditions is to minimize the number of individuals working in proximity at any one time and to conduct only research that is deemed critical. This includes activities that require limited access to university facilities, ensure basic maintenance and monitoring functions, and if discontinued would generate significant sample and data loss and delay funded project deliverables and / or graduation of students within the next 6 months. All other research functions should be conducted remotely and laboratory equipment placed in a state of hibernation.

General safety guidelines for essential university research activities include:

- **Any personnel who are ill (or have an ill household member) should not report to work.** Supervisors should be notified immediately.
- At least two persons should be in the lab at a time to ensure safety and security. Be sure to observe [social distancing and hygiene guidelines](#). No more than 3 individuals should be in a lab space at a time if possible.
- Work should only be conducted during typical business hours (8am-6pm) and during the specific times indicated in the essential research proposals that have been approved.
- Building access is provided only to those listed as approved personnel. No unapproved personnel shall be provided building access. No undergraduate students are permitted access.
- Ensure communications are in working order and emergency contact information is up to date.
- Update and discuss emergency procedures with your research group.
- Ensure all laboratory safety equipment is available and in proper working order (i.e. safety shower / eyewashes, fire extinguishers, spill kits, first aid kits, etc.).
- Ensure all local ventilation systems are functioning (i.e. fume hoods, snorkels, etc.).
- Avoid conducting high-risk operations such as the use of pyrophoric or air-sensitive reagents, previously untried hazardous operations, large scale reactions, etc.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) at all times.
- Chemical, biological, and radioactive waste for essential activities should be collected and stored according to established protocols. Waste pickup will be conducted on a case by case basis and may be delayed. Effort should be made to minimize the generation of waste during this period.
- Restrict required vehicle ridership to one person per vehicle whenever possible and provide adequate ventilation / air-flow.
- Continue to observe all prudent laboratory practices.
- Anticipate the potential for further restrictions, including a university-wide shutdown of all research operations. Under such conditions only maintenance and monitoring operations of critical infrastructure and living specimens will be approved.
- During modified operations, no laboratory equipment, chemicals, apparatuses, etc. may be transported home for use.

If there are questions or concerns regarding essential research functions, contact your supervisor or department leadership. [Occupational and Environmental Safety](#) is also available to assist during this period.