

March 19, 2020

To Purdue Researchers:

It is essential that we continue to take action to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our population. Maintaining research operations during this time presents unique challenges, but there must be no compromise in safety procedures or personal protection. To this end, principal investigators should ensure that all personnel working in campus facilities are following current social distancing and safety hygiene practices.

- Practice social distancing of 6 feet between adjacent people, and a reasonable density of one person for every 120 sq. ft. in all spaces. This may require establishing shifts for personnel to use offices, labs, and lab equipment.
- Ensure that everyone is wearing the proper lab and safety equipment, including lab coats and safety gloves. Inability to procure supplies doesn't allow one to ignore safety protocols or to engage in risky behavior. If it's not safe, don't do it.
- Continue to use the buddy system in labs with hazardous materials and procedures. It is always a good idea to have someone check on you periodically if you are working alone in the lab. The chemistry department offers [excellent guidance](#) on this topic.

As the national and local COVID-19 guidelines continue to evolve, we must be prepared to move to a significant reduction in our campus research operations on short notice. Additional direction for our researchers is provided below, and a checklist for a safe and orderly ramp-down of laboratories will be distributed separately.

Unless a project is related to COVID-19 or other essential research activities, don't begin experiments or procedures that can't be shut down safely on short notice.

To continue research remotely, laboratory members are encouraged to work on data analysis, writing projects, literature reviews, or online learning (coding, statistics, etc.). Be sure that researchers are well equipped to work remotely (VPN, Duo, etc.), and that special accommodations and approvals are obtained for use of proprietary or protected data and computing resources.

The long-term viability of many research programs during this period will require management of essential animal lines, equipment, liquid nitrogen stocks, and certain long-term experiments. To meet these needs, we request that each laboratory (or neighboring group of laboratories) identify 1-2 key personnel who will be responsible for this *essential* ongoing maintenance.

When determining the appropriate size of your lab's "skeleton crew," please also consider any equipment that might require gas or cryogen monitoring/service, such as deep-storage freezers, electron microscopes, mass spectrometers, and incubators. Keep in mind that any potentially hazardous operation will require at least two trained and qualified persons be present.

In animal facilities, breeding should be reduced to the minimum possible; no increases in cage counts will be permitted and all researchers should plan for the possibility of additional reductions of cage counts in the future. Labs using aquatic or avian species are expected to maintain basic animal care and husbandry operations, and labs with USDA-covered animals that require specialized lab care or intensive husbandry operations are expected to continue providing this care.

Most of our research programs and researchers are supported on externally funded sponsored programs. Federal agencies, such as NIH, NSF, DOD and others, are beginning to issue guidance on proposal submissions, no cost extensions, reporting deadlines, use of funds for salaries, travel, and other program support. A table that compiles up-to-date information from the federal agencies is available for [quick reference](#).

It is heartbreaking to tell a researcher to reduce or stop doing experiments. But we hope you appreciate the full magnitude of this crisis and understand that these short-term setbacks will lead to a better outcome than might otherwise occur.

See the [COVID-19 Research Website](#) for regular updates.

Sincerely,

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