



DEPARTMENT OF
Biochemistry
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

June 8, 2020

To: Biochemistry Department

From: Brian Fox, Chair
Rick Amasino, Vice-Chair
Judi Simcox, Chair, Department Equity and Diversity Committee
Josie Mitchell, Chair, Graduate Leadership and Development Committee

This information is for all members of the department. Please read it carefully, along with the information contained in the linked documents.

Biochemistry is fortunate to be included in the campus Phase 1 research restart effort. Starting Monday June 8, 2020, only researchers that have received prior approval to carry out on-site research will be able to return their lab. Your supervisor will have already informed you if you are permitted to return. For other researchers and staff, you must continue to work remotely as directed by your supervisor until further changes in campus guidelines are published.

Access to Biochemistry building is by key card access only until further notice. Undergraduates, family, friends and casual visitors are not permitted in Biochemistry buildings during Phase 1 of campus reopening efforts. If you do not have prior approval and need incidental access to any Biochemistry building, you must contact chair@biochem.wisc.edu to schedule your visit before coming to campus.

Preventing COVID-19 infection poses a greater challenge than many other viral diseases. These reasons include:

- 1) Asymptomatic individuals can be infectious;
- 2) COVID-19 has a greater probability than other viral diseases for spread by small droplets that can remain airborne (<https://www.sciencenews.org/article/coronavirus-covid-19-why-6-feet-may-not-be-enough-social-distance>);
- 3) Severe health consequences for some individuals who become infected.

Researchers who are coming on-site are required to review the following guidance documents:

- 1) Individual research lab Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP) (<https://biochem.wisc.edu>, see information under “Biochemistry Return to On-Site Research”);
- 2) Building research floor COOP (<https://biochem.wisc.edu>, see information under “Biochemistry Return to On-Site Research”);
- 3) Research Restart Guidelines from the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education (<https://research.wisc.edu/ovcrge-research-phase-1-guide2-research-uw-madison/>).

To protect the health of others and retain our privilege of working on-site, all on-site personnel will be expected to strictly adhere to the following:

- 1) Monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 such as dry cough or shortness of breath or two or more of the following: fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell (<https://coronavirus.uwhealth.org/symptoms-and-care/>). Stay home and in isolation if you are experiencing symptoms;
- 2) Practice good respiratory hygiene by covering coughs and sneezes, by not touching your face, and by frequent handwashing using soap;
- 3) Maintain physical distance of 6 feet or more from others both at work and in the community.

All on-site personnel will be expected to strictly adhere to the following practices while performing research:

- 1) The wearing of face masks in all common spaces including any large labs that have more than one person present. The Department has provided a limited supply of disposable “surgical-type” masks (labeled as non-medical) to each lab and researchers can order more disposable masks or use their own cloth masks. While research protocols in some labs may require medical-labeled surgical or NP95 masks, these types of masks are not required to meet this guideline;
- 2) Only one researcher may occupy a room smaller than 350 sq ft at any time. In practice all side rooms of main research labs, offices, conference rooms, and restrooms are smaller than this. Each floor will develop a protocol to ensure that restrooms are occupied by only one person at a time.
- 3) The Department will permit two people at a time in lunchrooms provided that researchers maintain the maximum spacing possible;
- 4) Individual lab and floor COOP plans provide additional protocols on the sanitization of shared spaces and equipment. On-site researchers are expected to know these protocols and use them at all times.

The Department will provide additional guidance as it becomes available, and welcomes your thoughts on ways these newly enacted guidelines can be improved to achieve our shared goals of providing for the safety of all workers in our research buildings while simultaneously re-

opening our research labs. Our successful return to research is recognized to be a key benchmark of the ability of campus to return to normal operation.

We look forward to your cooperation and diligence in demonstrating that Biochemistry can carry out research under the Phase 1 guidelines.

If anyone has concerns about the procedures in your research floor or building, please contact Brian Fox (chair@biochem.wisc.edu or bgfox@wisc.edu), Rick Amasino (ramasino@wisc.edu), Judi Simcox (jsimcox@wisc.edu) or Josie Mitchell (jpwerner2@wisc.edu).