



March 12, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Following [yesterday's communication](#) from the WSU Office of Research, and in planning for potential impacts regarding COVID-19 and for general best practices, the [VCEA Safety Council](#) would like all Voiland College personnel to ensure laboratory procedures are in place, including for communications, securing reactions, experiments, facilities, and live cultures. Each lab's procedures should consider options for the quarantine of individuals, interruptions of service, and limited access.

Please work with your [safety committee chair](#) to confirm completion of the following preparations **by Friday, March 20**.

Items to confirm in each lab's procedures include:

- Emphasize that there will be no pressure or penalty for graduate students to be present in the laboratory if they should be in quarantine or isolation – remote work may need to be identified.
- Identify all ongoing and/or unattended experiments. These may include work with ovens, furnaces, hot water or oil baths, solvent baths, extractions, cryogenics, cultures, solar, etc.
- Identify procedures to discontinue experiments in the event that access is lost by a key person or the entire research group.
- Ensure that for each experiment at least two people are familiar with the processes and can fully accommodate monitoring and shut down of the experiment(s).
- Provide consideration in planning with respect to high-risk groups such as those with people with serious chronic medical conditions and older adults. ([recommended guidelines per the CDC](#)).



- PI updates the contact list of all personnel working in each laboratory including email and contact number, such as home phone or cell phone (if lab personnel consent, this list could be shared among the lab's personnel).
- Above contact list is emailed to [School/Department Safety Committee Chair](#) and Administrative Manager for Unit (Title the Email with the PI Name(s), Building & Room Number).
- Identify how your group will communicate in event of disruption, and test those plans for your research group: WSU provides Microsoft Office 365, VPN, Zoom , Microsoft OneDrive, and Microsoft Teams (Request a Microsoft Team).
- Review the laboratory's lone work policies, noting that it is best practice to not work alone.
- Ensure the emergency contact numbers posted outside of the laboratory are current – one contact number should be to someone available outside of business hours, 24/7/365.
- Identify any equipment in need of continuous consumables to prevent damage (e.g. nitrogen sweep gas through an optics tank).
- Take stock of supplies critical to continuing work factoring in possible supply chain interruptions.
- Monitor and proactively request [waste pickups](#). Consider implementing more routine backups of live cultures when possible (e.g. freezing stabs, lyophilization, etc...).
- Consider alternative tasks for lab personnel in event of quarantine or isolation – remote work may need to be identified.



- Identify and confirm an alternate supervisor to the PI in event of personnel absence(s).

- Analyze the level of risks to data, and/or to fulfilling grant deadlines if experiments were to be interrupted. If you consider there to be risk, please ensure [Associate Dean Dave Field](#) is made aware of concerns and potential impacts.

If you have any additional questions or need clarification, please contact your [safety committee chair](#).

Continue to look for updates on WSU's response efforts at [WSU's COVID-19 web site](#) on a regular basis, and you can always send your questions to WSU's dedicated COVID-19 email COVID-19.info@wsu.edu.

Be Safe, Cougs!

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