Guidance for Training of Research Personnel During COVID-19 Pandemic

Purpose

Ensure health and safety of the campus community by minimizing the spread of the virus when training research personnel.

Location

Research labs.

Description of Task

The majority of individuals will continue working remotely. Individuals may be required to access campus for the purposes of training research personnel.

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For more information, contact Environmental and Occupational Health Support Services (EOHSS)
Updated as of July 27, 2020
Hierarchy of Hazard Control

Hazard mitigation should always focus on implementing control measures to eliminate or reduce risk. The hierarchy can be applied to any hazard in the workplace including COVID-19.

Continue Working Remotely
(Elimination of Hazard)

- Remove the potential for exposure to COVID-19

Adjust the Workplace
(Engineering Controls)

- Re-design or modify the workplace configuration to enable physical distancing

Adjust Work Processes
(Administrative Controls)

- Implement hand hygiene practices and/or make adjustments to other administrative processes such as staggered shifts, changing of work hours, etc.

Provide PPE

- Where the previous measures are not possible or are ineffective, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) may be necessary to reduce the potential for exposure to COVID-19

Continue Working Remotely

Individuals should continue to work remotely if appropriate tools and resources are available to complete their work tasks. Utilize technology where possible to conduct training for research personnel.

Adjust the Workplace (Engineering Controls)

Physical distancing (always keep a minimum distance of 6 feet(2m) from others) should be maintained as much as possible when conducting training for research personnel.

For more information, contact Environmental and Occupational Health Support Services (EOHSS)

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Adjust Work Processes (Administrative Controls)

Prior to scheduling training, instructors and trainees should be required to self-screen and stay home if sick (complete the Ontario COVID-19 self-assessment tool to help determine how to seek further care).

Scheduling of training should be implemented in such a way as to limit the number of individuals on campus, as with all other on campus activities.

Hygiene Practices: to prevent exposure, instructors and trainees should avoid touching face, eyes and mouth as well as conduct appropriate hand hygiene. Instructors and trainees should be aware of location of closest sink with soap and water or hand sanitizing station for hand hygiene.

Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment is required where physical distancing cannot be achieved during training of research personnel.

Procedural Guidelines

1) Ensure that all individuals involved in the training have completed the Ontario COVID-19 self-assessment tool prior to arrival.

2) Training should be limited to one on one interactions as much as possible.

3) Where possible, reorganize the research space to maintain physical distancing between the researchers and the trainees. If not possible, physical separation with barriers such as Plexiglas or other partitions should be considered.

4) Consider the use of floor markings and wayfinding signage that is clearly visible to maintain physical distancing within the research area.

5) If physical distancing cannot be achieved during specific training tasks, PPE is required (surgical mask and goggles or face shield).

6) In situations where contact is required between the instructor and the trainee (i.e., positioning a trainee’s hand to properly hold or use an instrument), the above noted PPE is required. Appropriate hand hygiene must also be conducted after completion of the task.

7) Ensure all high touch surfaces (i.e., door handles) are frequently disinfected and that hand washing, or hand sanitization stations are available.

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Updated as of July 27, 2020
8) Disinfect all research equipment or materials that are touched by trainees between each use.

9) In order to limit trainee contact with research equipment or materials as much as possible, instructors should point to or manipulate equipment or research material.

Resources

- Guidelines for Research Labs During the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Donning and Doffing Disposable Masks (videos)
- RMM 300 – Health & Safety Training Program
- Public Health Ontario
- Government of Ontario
- Government of Canada