

# Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Safety Guidelines for MCW Research Laboratories during COVID-19

Across the globe, items of PPE have been in high demand and have not always been immediately available or available at reasonable costs. The best practice is to conserve PPE as much as possible. Re-using “disposable” items, cleaning items that can be disinfected, and limiting the need to use items are all strategies that can help preserve PPE supplies across the board.

The following guidance has been prepared by the Office of Research with regard to current Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recommendations for work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Note that standard safety practices for research labs still apply, such as the need for specific PPE when working with certain chemicals, and these recommendations are to add an additional layer of protection for COVID-19 during the pandemic. The guidelines are provided in terms of environment/conditions.

## In MCW Public Spaces:

- Wear a face mask or cloth face covering in all public areas (required)
- Maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet whenever possible
- Masks/coverings are allowed to be removed when eating in designated spaces

Note: Anyone coming to campus must have completed the online daily Symptom Checker before entering an MCW facility.

## In MCW Research Labs with 2+ People Practicing Physical Distancing

- Wear a face mask or other face covering (required)
- Gloves are recommended for hand protection, but not required
- Eye protection such as a face shield or goggles is recommended, but not required

Note: Physical distancing is to have a space of 6 feet or more between two people at any given time. This rule does not apply to very brief moments of passing less than 6 feet apart in a corridor or narrow area. Safety measures to maintain 6 foot distancing may include implementing 1-way traffic flows or positioning bench use at opposite, diagonal corners.

## In MCW Research Labs with 2+ People Working Less Than 6 Feet Apart (Close Quarters Work)

- \*Mouth and Nose: A surgical mask or KN95 mask will provide adequate protection when used in combination with eye protection. Individuals may choose to wear a respirator (such as an N95) voluntarily, however they must 1) submit a [Medical Evaluation Questionnaire](#) to Occupational Health to assess that it is medically safe for them to wear it, 2) be cleared to wear it, and 3) receive required information on voluntary respirator use ([29 CFR 1910.134 Appendix D](#)). If you encounter breathing difficulty while using a respirator, discontinue use.
- \*Eye: Full face shield is recommended, lab splash goggles or wrap-around safety glasses also permitted
- \*Body: Lab coat, isolation gown, scrubs or other protective outer garb
- \*Hands: Disposable gloves

\*PPE is required for these areas. Note: Close Quarters Work is identified as work that must be carried out within the “6-foot bubble” of physical distancing for a prolonged period of time, such as a side-by-side procedure or observational training.

## ALWAYS:

- ✓ Clean and disinfect shared surfaces after use, such as bench tops, handles, and other touch points
- ✓ Wash hands often or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol
- ✓ Avoid touching your face, particularly your eyes, nose, and mouth