

Summer 2020 COE Safety Newsletter



These have been and will continue to be strange days. It is my hope that you are staying safe in all that you do and that you have been able to find productive outlets to maintain your physical and mental wellness.

As researchers are now entering the second month of our phase 1 return-to-campus operations and entering phase 2, I want to emphasize that lab safety remains just as important to your health and well-being as it was pre-pandemic. Despite warmer weather, I want to remind you that you still need to wear appropriate clothing and

footwear in your labs, in addition to wearing masks and practicing physical distancing. If you have questions or concerns about your lab PPE or appropriate attire, talk to your PI or supervisor, or contact me.

Here are some of the things your safety office is doing to help you as we continue to be vigilant about our individual and community health and safety:

- Hand sanitizer bottle refills: We have a 1-gallon sanitizer gel dispenser available for labs to refill their hand sanitizers. Located in the Engineering Hall loading dock by the cylinder return.
- Cloth masks: Campus is in the final steps of procuring cloth masks for the upcoming school year. COE Safety has 250 high quality cloth masks that we would like to offer; the first 50 people to sign up using this [Google Form](#) will receive five each.
- Disposable masks: These will continue to be available through the summer in the ME atrium for those approved to return to research. On Monday, July 6, approved staff and researchers will receive a box of 50 masks rather than 5 masks in a bag. This box will cover usage through the end of August (@ 5 masks/week). Bags of masks will no longer be distributed.
- Disinfectants in common areas: Spray bottles of isopropanol and wipes are available for use on tables in many of our common areas. COE Safety will continue to replenish these as needed. These locations are areas where you may remove your mask and eat lunch. Be sure to wipe down your area before you eat and when you are done.
- Lab safety consultations: We are here to help you improve the safety of your lab or workspace. If you have concerns about COVID-19 cleaning, lab occupancy, or other general lab safety questions, please contact us. For more complex questions, we can put you in touch with the appropriate expert in the UW Environment, Health and Safety Office.

Here are answers to some common questions we have gotten recently:

Q: I had close contact ([CDC definition of close contact](#)) with someone who has COVID-19 but I am not sick. What should I do?

A: Follow the guidance from [UW-Health](#) or your talk to your medical professional

Q: I had close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 and now I'm feeling sick. What should I do?

A: If you were exposed to COVID-19 and are experiencing symptoms, you must stay home, away from other

people, including household members (self-isolate), even if you have very mild symptoms. Contact your health care provider for a test. Tell them you were exposed to someone with COVID-19 and are now experiencing symptoms.

Q: Do I need to leave my lab if a vendor or someone from Facilities comes to the lab to make repairs?

A: No. They do not count against your lab's planned occupancy. Do your best to ensure that physical distancing is maintained during their time in the lab.

Q: Should I wear lab gloves outside the lab to help prevent transmission of COVID-19?

A: Gloves should only be worn in the lab. Always remove your gloves when you are leaving the lab unless you are traveling a short distance from one lab to another. Carry samples in a secondary container if transportation between floors and buildings is needed.

Q: Can I let my lab partner or someone else into a COE building if they forget their WISCard?

A: No. For accurate building occupancy count and better awareness of who is in COE spaces for potential contact tracing, all occupants need to swipe their own WISCard when entering.

Currently, the number of positive COVID-19 in Dane County is increasing. To avoid setbacks and closures, it is important for all of us to be mindful of public-health guidelines on campus and in our daily lives. The College of Engineering is a leader in confronting challenges. Many of our researchers are working on solutions related to COVID-19. We can all be leaders in our community by acting conscientiously.

Here is how you can help prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Avoid gatherings of 10 or more people.
- Wear a face mask in public spaces where others are gathered. Masks are required in all UW-Madison buildings unless you are the only occupant in the room.
- Maintain physical distancing wherever possible.
- Self-monitor for [symptoms](#) every day.
- Clean your hands often. Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Do not touch your face with unwashed hands.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes. Throw used tissues away and wash your hands.
- Clean common-touch surfaces and equipment frequently.
- Do not share your personal items with anyone.



For more information on COVID-19, check out the Wisconsin [Department of Health Services](#), [UW-Health](#), or UW-Madison [COVID-19](#) webpages.

Jesse Decker | Director for Safety
College of Engineering
University of Wisconsin-Madison
jjdecker2@wisc.edu
(608) 263-0267 | [CoE Safety](#)

Stay Safe Badgers

