Exposure Control Awareness and Research: COVID-19

Health, Safety & Wellness
Change Log

June 10, 2020 – Updated mask guidance. Navigate to the Medical and Non-Medical Masks: Care, Use and Maintenance Guidelines here for more information.

July 24: Updated campus recommendation for cloth masking in common areas/public areas.

Aug 17: Updated campus requirement for masking.
Training Purpose

This training is designed to:

• Raise safety awareness about COVID-19.

• Provide the latest safety guidance.

• Provide instructions on how to correctly wear personal protective equipment—PPE.
COVID-19

• Coronavirus disease 2019, or COVID-19, is a respiratory illness spreading from person-to-person.

• COVID-19 is considered a global pandemic with community spread.

• Most cases are mild and do not require hospitalization.

Symptoms may include:
  a) Chills
  b) Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
  c) Cough
  d) Diarrhea
  e) Fatigue
  f) Fever
  g) Muscle or body aches,
  h) Sore throat
  i) Shortness of breath
  j) difficulty breathing
  k) Runny nose
Overview

If you are feeling sick,

**DO NOT come to Campus**

Self-monitor symptoms. If symptoms develop, and you’re not sure if you should be tested for COVID-19:

Take the [COVID-19 self-assessment test](#).
Exposure

The spread of COVID-19 requires three things:

1. Source of infectious material
2. Means of transmission/exposure
3. Susceptible host
Exposure

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1. Source of infectious material
2. Means of transmission/exposure
3. Susceptible host

First, you need the infectious material. Materials like coronaviruses (COVID-19) can survive on hard surfaces for approximately 24 - 48 hours.
The spread of COVID-19 requires three things:

1. Source of infectious material
2. Means of transmission/exposure
3. Susceptible host

Second, you need a way to pass/transmit the virus. COVID-19 is thought to be spread by **contact** and **droplets**. (More on this in future slides.)
Exposure

The spread of COVID-19 requires three things:

1. Source of infectious material
2. Means of transmission/exposure
3. Susceptible host

Lastly, the virus needs a susceptible host. Not everyone develops a disease or infection when exposed. Some people may be immune, whereas some are more likely to get sick when exposed.
Exposure

COVID-19 can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose/mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales.

Exposure

These *droplets then land on objects* and surfaces around the person. Other people then catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then *touching their eyes, nose, or mouth*.

Touching cell phone and face with gloves used for work tasks.

Touching face with gloves used for work tasks.

Touching contaminated surfaces (fomites).
Exposure

People can catch COVID-19 if they *breathe in droplets* from a person with COVID-19 who coughs out or exhales droplets. This is why it is important to stay more than 2 meters (6 feet) away from a person who is sick. Unless you give them a mask to wear.

*Main routes of COVID-19 infection*[

Exposure Control

Standard Precautions

• If you have health related questions, speak with a well informed and educated person, like a medical professional.
• Take a moment to clean and disinfect items and areas like your cell phone, desk, tools, keys, flashlights, etc.

In the event of a known or suspected exposure:
• All areas, equipment, and clothing must be decontaminated with a Health Canada approved disinfectant (see future slides).
• Discard material soiled with blood and body fluids in a sealed plastic bag.
• Wash contaminated clothing separately in hot soapy water and dry in a hot dryer.
Reducing community spread of COVID-19

Take steps to protect yourself and others:

- COVID-19 is spread person-to-person or by touching contaminated surfaces.
- No vaccine is currently available.
- **Asymptomatic** individuals can spread the disease.
- Avoid being exposed by practicing social distancing.

As **asymptomatic** individuals can spread the disease, when applying precautionary measures everyone should be considered to potentially be infected.
Health and Safety Precautions

Maintain physical (social) distancing

- Maintain minimum 6 feet or 2 m away from others.
- Orient desks and workstations/lab benches to the 2 m standard.
- Use communication tools such as phone, email, web meetings as much as possible (including within the same building or floor).
- Group meetings and in-person meetings should be eliminated in favour of remote access meeting via video or phone.
- Stagger work hours/lunch breaks.
- Avoid shaking hands.
- Health Canada Social Distancing
Health and Safety Precautions

Use the recommended hand hygiene practices.

- Wash your hands frequently using proper handwashing technique for at least 15-20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your face.

Visit www.germsmart.ca to view a video demonstrating proper technique for handwashing with soap and water.
Health and Safety Precautions

Hand Sanitizer

- Use hand sanitizer (with >60% ethanol/>70% isopropanol) when handwashing isn’t possible.
- Is not a replacement for hand washing.
- It kills germs but does not remove them.

Alcohol based hand sanitizer may be available at UR Stores.

Visit www.germsmart.ca to view a video demonstrating proper technique using sanitizer.
Health and Safety Precautions

Practice Respiratory Etiquette

- Cough/sneeze into your elbow or
- Cover nose/mouth with a tissue.
- Use disposable tissues and discard after use.
- Use good hand hygiene after having contact with respiratory secretions or using a tissue.

Respiratory Etiquette
Health and Safety Precautions

Evaluate workspaces for frequently touched items and clean frequently.

- Work teams must clean surfaces, laptops, etc. with regular disinfectants or soap and water.
- Custodial Services disinfects frequently touched surfaces in common areas, such as door handles, railings and elevator buttons.

Minimize sharing of items as much as possible. Clean items/workstations between usages by different staff.

- E.g. laptops, phones, workstations, pens.
Health and Safety Precautions

Social Distancing in Elevators

• Help stop the spread of COVID-19.
• If possible, ride the elevator alone.
• Must maintain social distancing.
• Take the stairs when possible and available.
Surface Disinfection

Cleaning and Disinfection

• **Custodial Services** continues to clean and disinfect common touch points of buildings in service.

• Commonly touched areas in **public spaces that Custodial Services is cleaning** include:
  • light switches
  • doorknobs
  • toilets
  • sinks and faucets
  • Handrails

• If custodial services have been altered due to reductions in building usage, supervisors must contact the buildings custodial team lead to reinstitute services.
Cleaning Vs. Disinfection

There is a BIG difference!

**Cleaning**: Removal of dirt, organic matter, dust, etc. from a surface or object. Cleaning works by using soap and water to physically remove dirt from surfaces. This process does not kill germs.

**Disinfection**: Kills germs on surfaces or objects by using chemicals. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces.

It is very important to understand the chemical disinfectant you are using and how to use it properly. A heavily soiled surface may need to be cleaned before disinfected. A disinfectant requires sufficient contact time to properly disinfect a surface.

Note all directions found on a disinfectants label, including the required contact time. Many disinfectants must be applied generously and allowed to air dry.

**OxivirTb wipes** are available at UR Stores and have been approved by the Saskatchewan Health Authority as an effective disinfectant for COVID-19.
Disinfecting and Laboratories

- Laboratories must implement enhanced environmental cleaning/disinfecting.
- Commonly touched areas and shared equipment should be cleaned and disinfected by personnel working in that area at least twice daily, and when visibly soiled.

- Commonly touched areas in labs and work areas spaces that area personnel must clean/disinfect includes:
  - lab benches and equipment
  - touch-points in research and animal areas
  - desk and lab phones
  - personal lockers
  - shared PPE
  - touch screens/mobile devices and keyboards/mice must be cleaned between uses/users
Mask Information

Effective Tuesday, September 1, 2020, faculty, staff, students, and visitors, including vendors and contractors, are required to wear an appropriate face mask in all indoor areas of campus facilities including classrooms, common areas, libraries, hallways, stairwells, elevators, and study/work areas. Face masks are also required in outdoor campus areas where social distancing is not possible.

Health Canada has created a short educational video to help the public learn how to properly wear a non-medical mask. Click the video to the right to watch.

Non-medical masks are not personal protective equipment appropriate to protect you from airborne contaminants. They are, however, effective in reducing how often you touch your nose or mouth, and help contain droplets and particles from breathing, talking, coughing or sneezing.
An appropriate face mask:
A disposable or reusable mask that covers the mouth, nose and chin ensuring a barrier that limits the transmission of infectious respiratory droplets. All face masks, whether disposable or reusable, must be made with at least two layers of tightly woven, breathable material; fully cover the nose and mouth and secure under the chin; fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face; and be secured with ties or ear loops, allowing one to remain hands-free.

Masks fit people differently depending on their face shape, choose a mask that fits snugly and does not require adjustment/touching.
A face mask is intended to trap droplets that are released when the wearer breathes, talks, coughs or sneezes. Asking everyone to wear masks can help reduce the spread of the virus by people who have COVID-19 but don't realize it.

Face masks are most likely to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus when they are widely used by people in public settings. Locations that required face masks, testing, isolation and social distancing early in the pandemic have successfully slowed the spread of the virus.
Reusable Cloth Masks

Care and cleaning instructions for cloth masks

• Do not touch eyes, nose, or mouth when removing cloth masks.

• Masks should be changed when saturated from condensation, are wet, or after an event that may cause contamination.

• Cloth masks should be routinely washed in a washing machine.

• Wash hands with soap and water or apply hand sanitizer before and after removing cloth masks.
Mask Use

For information on when to mask, proper usage, availability, exemptions and more, visit the Health, Safety and Wellness COVID-19 Resource Page.

Laboratory and research users should take special care to review the Risk Based Mask Use section. Additional precautions may be required for respiratory activities or working with hazardous materials.
PPE Refresher: Doffing Gloves

As a refresher – remember to use the proper glove removal technique to prevent cross contamination

- Grasp the outside edge near your wrist.
- Peel away from your hand turning the glove inside-out.
- Hold in opposite gloved hand.
- Slide ungloved finger under the wrist of the remaining glove.
- Peel off from inside, creating a bag for both gloves.
- Discard gloves in garbage.
Principles of glove use

Keep in mind when considering the use of gloves as an exposure control barrier:

• Gloves that may be contaminated with hazardous materials must be properly disposed of before leaving the work area.

• Wearing gloves does not remove the need to wash your hands. You should wash your hands regularly, including whenever entering or before leaving the workspace.

• Always be aware of cross-contamination. Do not touch the face, nose, or mouth with gloves on. Gloves that are contaminated may contaminate all of the surfaces they touch.
PPE Refresher: removing PPE

Removing PPE Order:

Gloves → then → Glasses → then → Wash

Remember:
Always use proper glove procedures to avoid cross contamination.
Always take off gloves before leaving work areas and after completing tasks.
Working Alone/In the Field

**Working Alone** refers to any time a worker is alone on a worksite or is working in circumstances where assistance is not readily available to the worker in the event of injury, ill health, or emergency. **Working afterhours** refers to any work done outside of normal business hours.

During this unprecedented time there are **no normal business hours** and working alone cannot be avoided. For this reason, work groups must develop strategies to mitigate the risks of working alone/afterhours.

Worker: researcher, staff, working student
Working Alone/In the Field

Helpful tips for working alone/in the field:

- **Job Safety Analysis** – determine allowable/prohibited activities, task hazards and mitigation strategies. A risk assessment helps determine the hazards and how to mitigate them.
- **Develop a communication plan** – provide contact numbers, alternate contacts, and check-in intervals for those working in the field/alone.
- **Work Scheduling** – determine work locations, durations, supervision and alternate supervision.
- **Procedures for the safe stoppage of work** should symptoms or unsafe conditions arise.
Risk Assessment

A risk assessment helps identify the hazards of an activity, who they may harm, and how to mitigate them.

There are 5 main steps to completing a risk assessment:

1. Identify potential hazards
2. Assess the risk associated with each hazard
3. Select appropriate controls
4. Implement the selected controls
5. Assess the effectiveness of the selected controls
Risk Assessment

For example – identifying workplace/task hazards such as exposure, hazardous materials, equipment, slips/trips/falls. A risk matrix can be used as a visual tool to help determine the severity of the hazard and likelihood that it can harm someone.

It should also be determined who hazard may harm – workers, members of the public, family, etc.
Risk Assessment

Mitigate the hazard
There are many different controls that can be used to mitigate the hazards of a task. Find those that are most effective in lessening the risk. The most effective way of mitigating risk is eliminating the risk or source of risk whenever possible.
Risk Assessment

Mitigate the hazard

Elimination – remove the hazard entirely

Substitution – substitute for something less hazardous

**Engineering controls** – includes designs or modifications to equipment, ventilation systems, and any process that reduces the source of exposure

**Administrative controls** – controls that alter the way the work is done, implementing policies and procedures. For example developing a Standard Operating Procedure.

**Personal Protective Equipment** – worn by individuals to reduce exposure, such as lab coats, safety glasses, gloves or respiratory equipment.

While COVID-19 is a novel hazard, there remain many different hazards within a workspace, all of which should be re-evaluated for the current circumstances.
Hazardous Materials and Equipment

As the circumstances surrounding access to facilities, supplies and supports are fluid it is imperative to coordinate and plan for the following:

• Maintenance/availability of emergency equipment (eyewash flushing, first aid kits, spill kits).
• Ensure appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is available prior to starting any work/experiment. If adequate PPE is not available, do not conduct any experiments.
• Ensure all hazardous materials and waste are cleaned and stored before leaving the lab, avoid all temporary storage or conditions that may require intervention.
• Do not leave hazardous equipment or conditions that may require intervention.
• Prepare a contingency plan in case access is severely restricted or laboratories/work areas are shut down for a prolonged period of time.
• Ensure all personnel and back-ups have received documented training.
Self-Monitoring

• Self-monitor personal health for COVID-19 symptoms.

• If you are sick, please stay home.

• Supervisors are encouraged to review symptoms regularly.

• Develop plans for safe stoppage of work should symptoms arise at work. Notify your supervisor if you develop unexplained new or worsening symptoms.

• Keep up to date with known symptoms – which may include:

  • Fever (>38.0°C)
  • Headache
  • Chills
  • Shortness of breath/Difficulty breathing
  • Loss of sense of taste or smell

  • Fatigue (tired)
  • Aches and pains
  • Sore throat
  • Runny Nose
Self Monitoring

Guidance on monitoring symptoms and evaluating health from federal, provincial and local health authorities are constantly evolving.

To help slow the spread of COVID-19 and stay informed, consider utilizing resources like Health Canada’s COVID-19 App. This app allows you to do daily symptom tracking, keep up to date with the latest resources, updates and stats, as well as providing fast and efficient decision making on self-monitoring and testing.
Self-Isolation

The Government of Saskatchewan has mandated three groups of people must self-isolate:
- Anyone returning from international travel (must isolate for 14 days)
- Anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 (follow advice of health care provider)
- Close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases

If a worker has come in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 and the worker DOES develop symptoms, they are required to self-isolate until all of the following have occurred:

| It has been at least 14 days since symptoms started | It has been at least 72 hours since the individual had a fever | All other symptoms have improved |

For more information on when to self-isolate see the Government of Saskatchewan Resources:

- [Saskatchewan Mandatory Self-Isolation Guide](#)
- [Saskatchewan Self-Isolation Page](#)
Exposure and Suspected Exposure

**Notify your supervisor If you:**

Have been exposed to a confirmed positive case;

Suspect exposure to a confirmed positive case; or

develop unexplained new or worsening symptoms.

The plan for post-exposure investigation and follow-up will ensure that:
- Measures taken to minimize the risk of your infection;
- Exposure is investigated and documented;
- You receive timely medical evaluation or medical intervention if required.

For more information or useful links visit the University of Regina [COVID-19 Page](https://www.uregina.ca/covid-19/)

If you have any questions about this module forward them to Health, Safety & Wellness (Health.Safety@uregina.ca)