1. Purpose

As of 5/7/2020 the guidance given by UW at Guidance for Returning to In-Person Research added two new areas of research, allowable under the Governor’s Phase 1 plan, as part of “essential services”

- All areas of research that are **required to meet an upcoming deadline**.
- All facilities that support research, if the support cannot be carried out remotely.

The basic guidance that “Work that can be done remotely, should be carried out remotely” remains in place, and thus typical office work at UW is presently not permitted. However, some research that must be done on-campus is allowed, but subject to a set of requirements to which all personnel must adhere. In addition to this overall plan for the Department, laboratory PIs must develop a plan to manage safety in their labs, according to the University’s checklist for returning to in-person research work, and have this plan approved by the Chair and the Administration. Social distancing of at least 6 feet at all times is required, but if you believe you have an extraordinary circumstance incompatible with this rule, you will need to contact EH&S to request a waiver.

The Research Recovery Plan for the Physics-Astronomy Building (PAB) requires compliance with all Washington State and UW guidelines. In addition, it specifically defines procedures and standards to be followed by all individual research plans in the Astronomy Department. It also provides the department wide distribution plan for cleaning and safety supplies.

The guidelines are partially based on those put in place by the Physics Department, with further modifications. The section UW COVID-19 Health and Safety Resources provides links and excerpts from UW guidelines and information handouts. Following those links is required to stay up to date, as the official guidelines are expected to evolve with the changing situation.

The current university requirements are:

- Maintain 6ft of physical distance between people at all times.
- Minimize the number of people in a work area at the same time.
- If multiple people are in a space, every person must be able to enter, work in, and exit the space while maintaining 6 ft of physical distance from other occupants.
- Small, narrow offices/facilities on the order of 100-150 square feet can accommodate only one person at a time safely.

The Guidelines below should help us meet the requirements.
2. Guidelines

Orientation and safety communication

- On the initial workday of each essential worker or if any changes take place in procedure or Department of Health guidance, PIs must schedule a virtual meeting to update their staff about safety measures. The initial meeting for each essential worker, its attendees, and the date has to be documented by the PI. This new required training should be treated like any training requirement for their research group, and the documentation should be kept with any other required training documentation. This orientation/training should discuss the topics below as well as the following specifics.
  - Remind people of 6 ft social distancing rules
  - Remind people to stay home if sick or if they have known COVID-19 exposure.
  - Encourage good hygiene and social distancing, Stay Healthy Husky Guide: Stay Healthy
  - Remind people that participating in in-person resources is currently voluntary.
- In the absence of changes, the Department will send bi-weekly reminders to all personnel reminding them of current safety guidelines.
- The Department will provide hardcopies of EH&S and UW documents that should be displayed prominently in individual lab spaces.
  - UW Social Distancing at Work
  - Stay Healthy Husky Guide: Stay Healthy
  - EH&S: COVID-19 Health and Safety Resources
  - EH&S University Requirements for COVID-19 Prevention in the Workplace
  - Guidance on Facemask use for Preventing the Spread of COVID-19
  - “What do I do if I am sick”

Face mask policy

Given that COVID-19 appears to be effective at spreading through airborne droplets, the use of facemasks that cover the nose and mouth is required when either multiple people are working in a shared space or an individual is in a building common area. This aligns with King County’s directive effective May 18, 2020 and operating procedures at national laboratories. As medical-grade and N95 masks should be preserved for health-care workers, private cloth face masks or the face masks used for lab work are recommended. Guidance on Facemask use for Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 is available from UW.
Self-attestation each workday

Before reporting to work, employees and students must complete an attestation to confirm that they are not experiencing any of the symptoms outlined in the attestation using Workday. The attestation must be completed before coming to work. If a student is not in Workday, they should send their attestation via the Department Visitor Attestation & Contact Tracing Form.

If you feel sick

- You must say home!!!! See “What do I do if I am sick”
- Inform your PI or supervisor, who then informs the Department Administrator (ryng@uw.edu) and Chair (jdal@uw.edu).
- If your health-care provider confirms or suspects that you have COVID-19, contact the EH&S Employee Health Center atemphlth@uw.edu or 206.685.1026.
- If you are working in the basement and willing to share this private information, inform the PAB basement lab group directly using this contact list. Please contact this group even on suspected illness, so that early warnings can be communicated.
- Please be familiar with some of the unusual symptoms of COVID-19 that may signal illness in otherwise asymptomatic individuals. In addition to fever and cough, loss of smell and taste is a common presentation.

![Tracking Symptoms Diagram](nature)
Responsible Use of Shared Spaces

- Face masks must be worn in all shared spaces to minimize airborne transmission.
- Shared offices and labs should coordinate weekly work plans to maximize social distancing (see below)
- Minimize touching door handles with bare skin or contaminated materials (gloves, etc)
- Restrooms are likely to be the most heavily used shared spaces.
- Restrict yourself to the restroom on the same floor as your workspace
- Only have one person in the restroom at a time.
  - If the bathroom is currently occupied, wait several minutes between users to allow possible airborne particulates from flushing to settle.
  - Use paper towels for touching, in particular after washing your hands. Waste baskets will be placed outside.
  - Hallway doors to the restroom should be left open at all times to reduce contact with door handles.
- No more than one person can be in the elevator at a time without violating the 6 ft distancing requirement.
- Minimize time in shared spaces like kitchens, conference rooms, and the mailroom, restricting your access to essential activities. The kitchen will have disinfecting wipes, which you should use to clean before and after use.
- In-person meetings should be held outdoors whenever possible.

Contact tracing & Scheduling

- Contact tracing & scheduling will be done through Google and iCal calendars.
- Every workspace should have an associated Google and iCal scheduling calendar, whether that space is shared or not. All calendars should be shared with the Department Administrator Robert Young (ryng@uw.edu).
- Everyone should pre-register their intent to access their workspace by entering approximate dates and times into the associated Google or iCal calendar. More advance notice allows high-risk members of the department to avoid high-traffic times.
- Upon leaving their workspace for the day, everyone should update their calendar with their actual arrival and departure times to allow accurate contact tracing.

Visitors

Anyone not affiliated with an individual lab or the Department must use the Department Visitor Attestation & Contact Tracing Form to do their attestation of health, their expected location, their host, and their contact tracing information. Any visitor must be given a copy of these guidelines.
Cleaning supplies and PPEs

Detailed cleaning instructions have been compiled by the Physics machine shop and will be posted on its [website](#). Additional information on cleaning can be found at [COVID-19 Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfection Protocols](#). Disposable masks will be provided as needed, but reusable fabric masks are recommended to conserve PPE. Reusable masks should be disinfected regularly.

For basement lab spaces:

- In coordination with Physics, each lab will be provided with a clear plastic tote to be used to store PPE supplies (gloves, spray bottle filled with disinfectant and wipes). The tote will be filled with enough supplies for one week of use. At the end of each week, bring the tote to the machine shop to restock your PPE supplies for the upcoming week. Spray bottles can also be refilled in the machine shop as needed. The restocking procedure will be organized without personal contact with instructions issued by the machine shop.

Outside the PAB basement:

- The department will supply gloves and disinfecting wipes, with distribution coordinated through requests to the Department Administrator Robert Young (ryng@uw.edu).

Individual lab guidelines

In addition to the guidelines above, key features of each labs’ Return to Work Plan must be responsive to the following:

- Designate a COVID-19 Supervisor for all spaces. Each PI should be designated as the COVID-19 Supervisor for their research group in their Return to In-Person Research plan, or the PI may delegate these responsibilities to a senior research group member who will be regularly present in the research facility. The COVID-19 Supervisor responsibilities are to ensure compliance with COVID-19 related requirements and to be available to receive concerns and answer questions.
- The COVID-19 Supervisor should check in with the research group regularly regarding compliance, and must be available by phone or email.
- The plan should include a floor-plan of the space explaining where work will take place under social distancing guidelines.
- Wherever possible, installing physical barriers with plexiglass are encouraged.
- Post lab-specific safety protocols at the lab entrance, in addition to required UW signage.
- Office-type work that is not immediately associated with essential lab work should be done remotely as much as possible.
- Labs should designate their own cleaning protocols and schedules according to guidance from UW EH&S: [COVID-19 Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfection Protocols](#).
Machine shops

If your work involves the machine shop, please be aware of the following guidelines from Physics. The following is based upon plans instituted in May; updated Physics guidelines can be found at https://phys.washington.edu/safety

Main machine shop:
- Use electronic job submission via work request for the main shop to minimize contact between users and machine shop staff.
- Define designated drop off/ pick up area for providing/receiving hardware from the shop.

Student shop:
- Establish lab schedulers as with other shared spaces. Initially operate only during main shop working hours. In this case, one person working alone is ok, as this can be monitored by main shop staff.
- Gloves are considered safety hazards in the shop. Clean workspace and equipment before and after work, don’t touch your face during work and wash your hands afterwards.
- Main machine shop staff will post signs of these rules at the shop and announce when off hour work will be allowed. A SOP and signage will provide instructions on proper cleaning of the machines used.
- Paper towel dispensers were ordered for the student shop. This should be the easiest way for the student shop users to wipe down the machine after spraying contact surfaces with disinfectant.
- Sharing of safety glasses is not allowed, and own safety glasses should be acquired for the student shop.
3. **UW COVID-19 Health and Safety Resources**

- [Washington State Coronavirus Response](#)
- [Guidance for Returning to In-Person Research](#)
  
  Recent detailed instructions for re-starting in-person research.
- [UW COVID-19 Health and Safety Resources](#)
  
  This page is the switchboard to many relevant reference files, including cleaning, disinfection and PPEs.
- [University Requirements for COVID-19 Prevention in the Workplace](#)
  
  Requirements and information for practical steps for staying healthy in the lab.
- [Novel coronavirus & COVID-19: facts and resources](#)
- [Some Stay-Healthy posters](#)