Resources for Researchers at Colorado State University

Colorado State University continues to closely monitor the outbreak of coronavirus disease, known as COVID-19, and plan for its potential impact on campus operations. The campus is following guidance from Colorado Public Health Departments and the US Centers for Disease Control. We believe the best course of action is to proactively take steps that will help protect our community. This sheet is intended to provide guidance and resources for the Colorado State University Research Community, to assist in planning for potential impacts and ensuring research continuity during the coronavirus outbreak.

1. **Immediate Term Measures to Avoid/Reduce Transmission of COVID-19**

To reduce the potential transmission of the coronavirus (or other colds and flu) in the coming weeks, the VP for Research asks that all campus labs and research facilities put in place the following measures:

- Follow CDC’s recommended procedures to reduce the spread of COVID19.
- Review opportunities for lab personnel and support staff to work remotely
- Increase disinfecting of laboratory and communal spaces
- Consider curtailing travel
- Consider cancelling or postponing field research trip
- Cancel all non-essential CSU-related travel to CDC Level 2 and 3 countries

Review current campus travel guidelines and enforce self-isolation as necessary. For more information visit the university COVID-19 safety website.

2. **Longer Term Planning for Research Continuity**

Principal Investigators and Research Managers should begin scenario planning now for the potential that research and campus operations need to continue with reduced or remote staffing, if significant numbers of research or research support personnel become ill, or large-scale self-isolation is required. Any changes to research support unit operations will be posted on this page and communicated to the campus.

Assumptions to use for planning, should widespread COVID-19 communal transmission require campus support operations to be delivered remotely, or with reduced staffing due to illness:

- Life safety and the good health of our research workforce and animals will remain our highest priority.
- Assume that essential research infrastructure, such as power and telecommunications, will be maintained.
- Assume that research administration units, such as the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) and the Research Acceleration Office (RAO) will continue to provide service such as proposal preparation and submission and award management.
- Assume that the offices of Laboratory Animal Resources (LAR) and Environment, Health & Safety (EHS) will maintain their critical oversight functions, with back-up plans should the campus go into curtailed access.

Nevertheless, PIs should plan for the following possibilities:

- Be prepared for some of your laboratory workforce to fall ill or be required to self-isolate.
Be prepared to decontaminate the workspace of an ill researcher in your laboratory.
Be prepared for core facilities and other fee-for-service resources to become unavailable.
Be prepared for critical supply orders to be delayed. PIs should work with their building manager to coordinate essential deliveries.
Be prepared for building or laboratory access to be curtailed. The campus will notify the affected communities as soon as possible.
Be prepared that processing of visas by the federal government may be delayed, resulting in delayed appointments.

Steps you can take now to ensure continuity of critical research functions in case of a severe outbreak:

✓ Identify procedures and processes that require regular personnel attention (e.g., cell culture maintenance, animal studies).
✓ Assess and prioritize critical laboratory activities. Create an accurate inventory of laboratory chemicals and sensitive laboratory instrumentation and equipment, and share this information with your building manager and EH&S.
✓ Identify any research experiments that can be ramped down, curtailed, or delayed.
✓ Identify key personnel able to safely perform essential activities to ensure the continuity of your laboratory’s research capability.
✓ Ensure that you have access to up-to-date email and telephone contact information for your critical staff.
✓ Cross-train research staff to substitute for others who may be out sick or unable to come to work.
  o Ensure staff have the appropriate, up-to-date training.
  o Encourage all researchers to be familiar with each other’s work if an absence would threaten the loss of experiments (such as which cells need transferring to new media, etc.)

✓ Coordinate with colleagues who have similar research activities to identify ways to ensure mutual support and coverage of critical activities.
✓ Maintain an enough inventory of critical supplies that may be impacted by global shipping delays. Inform your building manager if your lab relies on regularly-scheduled supplies such as liquid nitrogen, dry ice or helium. Coordinate those deliveries with building management.
✓ Consider installing remote control monitoring devices for critical equipment (e.g., -80C freezers, liquid nitrogen storage dewars, incubators).
✓ Communicate significant planned absences and/or lab closures to your College’s Research Associate Dean and other key administrative units in accordance with your college’s preparedness plan.
✓ Contact your departmental leadership, building manager and EHS staff if you need assistance in reviewing your continuity plans.
✓ Ensure that individuals performing critical tasks have been adequately trained and understand whom to contact with technical or safety questions.
✓ Avoid performing high-risk procedures alone. When working alone is necessary, exercise extreme caution.
✓ Ensure that research team members notify colleagues of their schedule when working alone for an extended period.
✓ Ensure that high-risk materials (radioactive, biohazards, chemicals) are properly secured.