Guidelines for Researchers at Colorado State University

Colorado State University Research is responding to COVID-19 pandemic with a plan for its impact on campus operations. The campus is following guidance from Colorado Public Health Departments and the US Centers for Disease Control. In order to protect our community, all labs will be closing by Monday, March 23 2020 except for critical research and critical research operations. Critical research is that which, if halted, delayed or interrupted, could result in:

- Endangerment to human subjects or pose unreasonable risk to human subjects;
- Endangerment to animal subjects or pose unreasonable risk to animal subjects;
- Loss of experiments or data that will be impossible to replicate; and/or
- Loss of instrumentation, infrastructure, and/or an unsafe/unsecured laboratory environment or other catastrophic loss.

We will reevaluate this guidance by April 15, 2020 but anticipate this guidance could remain in place significantly longer.

University operations and labs are currently open for business to all students and university personnel. Consult with your HR liaison for personnel, staffing level, and remote work questions.

1. Immediate Term Measures to Avoid/Reduce Transmission of COVID-19 – Please follow these guidelines and those on the CSU COVID-19 website.

2. Steps you can take now to ensure continuity of critical research functions:
   - Identify and communicate critical research and or critical research operations (see criteria below) that need to be continued and supported during a potential research shut down. Communicate with your supervisor or with your Research Associate Dean regarding the critical personnel required for these functions. Prepare your labs and research operations in the event of a university closure.
     o Consider laboratory chemicals, sensitive laboratory instruments and equipment, and other hazards.
       ▪ Follow guidelines to ensure that high-risk materials (radioactive, biohazards, chemicals) are properly secured.
       ▪ Ensure that your College’s Research Associate Dean is aware of closed labs and personnel on leave, working remotely, or on campus
• Wind down existing non-critical research and research operations that could be compromised by university closure. Do not initiate new research studies, particularly if data would be lost in the event of university closure. Ensure that you have access to up-to-date email and telephone contact information for your critical staff. All students, staff able to work remotely should be encouraged to do so.
  o Coordinate with colleagues who have similar research activities to identify ways if personnel can be minimized through collaboration.
  o Avoid performing high-risk procedures alone. If this is unavoidable, inform your leadership and follow guidelines to ensure you are safe.

3. 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), Biosafety Office (BSO), and Environmental Health Services (EHS) will maintain their critical oversight functions, with back-up plans should the campus go into curtailed access.
   • Assume that 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.

4. 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:
• Use your best judgment, follow social distance practices
• Follow CDC’s recommended procedures to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
• Review opportunities for lab personnel and support staff to work remotely
• Increase disinfecting of laboratory and communal spaces
• Curtail non-essential travel
• Consider cancelling or postponing field research trip
• Cancel CSU-related travel to CDC Level 2 and 3 countries
• Review current campus travel guidelines and enforce self-isolation as necessary.

Criteria for “critical research” and “critical research operations” designation include those that, if interrupted or delayed, could result in:
  o Endangerment to human subjects or pose unreasonable risk to human subjects;
  o Endangerment to animal subjects or pose unreasonable risk to animal subjects;
  o Loss of experiments or data that will be impossible to replicate; and/or
  o Loss of instrumentation, infrastructure, and/or an unsafe/unsecured laboratory environment.

Guidelines to ensure that your research areas, materials, and instruments are secure:
• Make sure doors are secured and locked to your office and research; please do not prop open any doors.
• All high-risk materials should be stored according to their appropriate procedures.
• IMPORTANT CONTACTS:
  o Chemical safety (http://www.ehs.colostate.edu/WChemMgt/Home.aspx)
  o Radioactive/laser/magnetic safety (http://www.ehs.colostate.edu/WRad/Home.aspx)
  o Occupational health (http://www.ehs.colostate.edu/WOHSP/Home.aspx)
  o Environmental Health Services (http://www.ehs.colostate.edu/Default.aspx)
• Questions concerning biosafety should be directed to the Biosafety Office (https://www.research.colostate.edu/bso/)
• Questions concerning studies in vivarium should be directed to the Attending Veterinarian (Lon.Kendall@colostate.edu)
• Questions concerning research interruptions affecting IACUC research compliance should be directed to RICRO_IACUC@colostate.edu
• Questions concerning research interruptions affecting IRB research compliance should be directed to RICRO_IRB@colostate.edu
• All research safety concerns and near misses need to be reported to the Research Safety Culture Program website ASAP (https://www.research.colostate.edu/research-safety-culture/). This reporting NEVER results in any punitive measures. Your safety is our top priority. The Research Safety Culture Program is here to help!
• In the event of an emergency, please dial 911, or if you are conducting work in a restricted/containment area, please also follow emergency procedures specific to your research area. It is important that you communicate which CSU campus you are located in and the exact building name, address, and room location so that first responders can get to you as quick as possible

**Guidelines regarding performing critical research during campus closure:**

• Avoid performing research experiments and operations alone.
• If working alone becomes necessary, please have at least one person aware of and responsible for knowing:
  o Where you will be working and a contact phone number
  o What you will be working with
  o Times and duration you will be doing the work
  o A time that you will contact this person and that failure to make contact will result in this person contacting Campus Police to do a welfare check
  ▪ Campus Police contacts:
    • [https://police.colostate.edu/](https://police.colostate.edu/)
    • 970-491-6425 non-emergency number
    • Dial 911 for an emergency in progress – please let the dispatch officer know which CSU campus you are located in and provide the exact name of the building