

COVID-19 GUIDELINES FOR SCHOLARLY AND CREATIVE PROJECTS

Spelman College is committed to minimizing the spread of COVID-19 to protect the health & safety of our community. Faculty, staff and students returning to campus must follow the [AUCC guidance](#) on COVID-19 mandatory vaccination, testing, symptom tracking and monitoring, and contact tracing.

The purpose of this document is to layout safety guidelines to resume scholarly and creative projects done outside of coursework. The guidelines are in consistent with the public health guidelines outlined by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Note: For the purpose of this document, ‘Research spaces’ refer to research laboratories, maker spaces, the Innovation Lab, and other spaces where research is done. ‘Research Supervisors’ refer to the person who leads a lab or research group.

Individuals are not allowed in research spaces if they have symptoms that are associated with COVID-19, have a suspected or positive diagnosis of COVID-19, or have known exposure to COVID-19. Common symptoms include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or running nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea.

Research Supervisors must be aware that scholarly and creative projects may have to be halted again due to an outbreak of COVID-19 or national, state or local orders.

Guidelines listed below must be followed when resuming research activities on campus:

General

- All personnel are expected to maintain 6 ft of physical distancing when possible.
- Face masks/coverings must be worn at all times while on campus regardless of the status of COVID-19 vaccination. Face masks/coverings must cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly against the face. Face shields do NOT replace mask wearing.
- Students are allowed to participate in in-person research and scholarly activities on campus.
- Frequent handwashing is highly encouraged. Wash hands for at least 20 seconds upon entry to research space, and before departure.
- Research Supervisors must notify the Office of Undergraduate Studies if a student who has been in their research spaces becomes ill, is required to quarantine, or has tested positive for COVID-19 as this will require a shut down for cleaning and disinfecting. Similar situations pertaining to employees must be reported to the Office of Human Resources.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Research Supervisors must ensure they have soap, paper towels, hand sanitizers, and disinfectants available in their research spaces. Facilities Management Services (FMS) (404-270-5440) can be contacted for acquiring the aforementioned supplies.
- Disinfectants recommended for cleaning and disinfecting are 10% bleach solution, 70% ethanol, and [EPA-registered household disinfectants](#). It is recommended that disposable gloves be worn when using disinfectants. *Note: Please ensure the disinfectants used are compatible with the surface being cleaned. Pay attention to disinfectants that are flammable, corrosive and toxic (10% bleach solution can be toxic to eyes/skin, 70% ethanol is flammable).*
- It is recommended that common areas and frequently touched surfaces be disinfected before the start and after the end of a work shift and as frequently as possible. Examples of frequently touched surfaces include:
 - Doorknobs and light switches
 - Benchtops and other work surfaces
 - Equipment handles and latches
 - Equipment controls and touchpads
 - Drawer and cabinet handles
 - Sashes of chemical safety fume hoods and biosafety cabinets (located in laboratories in Science Center)
 - Faucet handles and spray grips
 - Chemical containers and lids, including chemical waste containers
 - Chair backs and armrests (Note: Fabric chairs cannot be decontaminated and should not be used)
 - Desktop, keyboards, mouse, and other electrical equipment

Equipment

- If possible, sharing of equipment/materials must be kept to a minimum.
- It is recommended that a sign-up sheet for shared equipment be maintained to minimize in-person contact and ensure physical distancing.
- Disinfectants must be readily available in areas where equipment is located. It is prudent to ensure all users disinfect equipment before and after each use.
- It is recommended that equipment manuals and standard operating procedures (SOPs) be reviewed for safe startup.

Prudent Practices for Working in Laboratories in Science Center

- Ensure that bench tops and other work surfaces are disinfected before and after use.
- Stagger work schedules to limit the number of personnel allowed in the research spaces to ensure physical distancing of at least 6 feet is maintained. If possible, avoid using both sides of shared benches.

- Follow the guidelines below when using personal protective equipment (PPE):
 - All research personnel must have an individual set of lab coats and safety glasses/goggles.
 - Lab coats, gloves and any other PPE used in the laboratories must not be worn outside the lab spaces.
 - Disposable gloves must not be reused.
 - Research supervisors are responsible to ensure that all research personnel working in their research spaces have access to face masks/coverings and gloves. Research supervisors must conduct an inventory of PPE (gloves, face masks) if large amounts of PPE were donated during the shut-down/shelter-in-place order.
 - Sharing of items such as thermal gloves, laboratory face shields is highly discouraged. It is recommended that inventory of these items be increased to ensure research personnel have an individual set. If the inventory cannot be increased, research personnel must disinfect shared aforementioned items before and after each use. It is also recommended that a clean pair of gloves be worn when handling such items.
- Keep laboratory doors closed at all times to allow maximum air ventilation.
- Check for the following upon initial returning to the research space:
 - Chemical spills
 - Local alarms indicating disruption of equipment
 - Sharp odor

If any of the above situation is encountered, the hazard should be isolated (e.g., closing the door to the lab), other research personnel in the area must be notified, and the situation must be reported to Environmental Health & Safety Compliance (EHSC) Unit (mdhakal@spelman.edu, 404-270-5709) and Core Laboratory Technician (williamsnicolelisa@spelman.edu, 404-270-5785).

- Dispose any chemicals that might have expired during the shut-down. Pay attention to time-sensitive chemicals such as chloroform and peroxide-forming chemicals. Contact EHSC Unit for disposal of any chemicals or chemical waste.
- Ensure chemicals are segregated per hazard classification.
- Power up equipment one at a time to avoid overload of electrical circuits.
- Ensure electrical equipment cords are in good condition before connecting to power sources. Do not use extension cords. If using power strips, ensure they are connected directly to a wall outlet.
- Confirm fume hoods are operating as normal. If the hood does not have flow monitoring device, use a tissue or Kimwipe to ensure air flow. Adequate air flow will draw a tissue or Kimwipe towards the hood. Ensure that the sash of the hood can be raised to the mechanical stop or 18 inches. Contact EHSC Unit for any maintenance issue.
- Ensure all compressed gas cylinders are chained/secured.
- Ensure emergency response contact information is posted near the exit.

Resources

[CDC Guidelines on Cleaning and Disinfecting](#)
[CDC Guidance for Institutions of Higher Education](#)