BPK Department COVID-19
Research Restart Protocol

BPK’s top priority is to ensure the safety and well-being of our students, staff, and faculty while increasing research activity in a phased approach according to university, provincial, and federal guidelines. Until containment and mitigation of the COVID-19 pandemic is achieved, restarting and safely conducting lab research will require modifications to the usual work protocols. These precautionary measures will include enhanced use of PPE, physical distancing, and increased lab cleaning and disinfection practices. With adherence to the following protocol, research can restart safely and productively.

General precautions:
- Maintain 2m physical distancing at all times; avoid gatherings
- Disinfect surfaces with 70% ethanol or isopropyl alcohol, before and after use.
  - Do NOT spray surface directly, particularly electronic surfaces. Wet paper towels or Kimwipes with disinfectant prior to wiping down surfaces.
  - Note common points of contact, e.g. door knobs, light switches, equipment handles
- Wear a mask, if possible, in common areas and labs.
- If sick or exhibiting symptoms, stay home and notify your supervisor.
  - If diagnosed with COVID-19, notify supervisor and appropriate personnel immediately for contact tracing and exposure warnings, particularly for cross-departmental users.
- Wash hands for a minimum of 20 seconds when leaving/entering rooms and labs and before/after using equipment that does not require gloves.
- All PIs must take responsibility for themselves and their personnel for adhering to safety protocols.
- All PIs and personnel allowed to pursue research activities have a responsibility for themselves and others to protect and limit exposure and transmission of the virus.

Stairwells, Elevators and Hallways:
- Take stairs when physically possible; use elevators for transferring materials/supplies safely.
- Be mindful of stairwells that are designated as one-way
  - In TASC2, the following stairwells are two-way: open atrium main staircase, the east side enclosed staircase.
  - In TASC2, the following stairwell is DOWN only: enclosed staircase to the west of the open atrium main staircase.
  - In Shrum K, the following stairwell is two-way: enclosed staircase across from the BPK Main Office.
- Use a pen, knuckle or elbow for elevator buttons.
- A single occupant should occupy elevators and enclosed stairwells at a time.
- Follow basic traffic rules:
  - Walk on the right-side of the stairwells and halls.
  - Let others in the hallways pass first when exiting rooms, labs, elevators and stairwells

Common equipment rooms (K9604, K9605, SSB (MBB) common rooms):
- A single occupant should occupy the room at a time, unless safe distancing can be maintained.
- Use the “Occupied/Unoccupied” sign hanging on the door handle when entering the room.
  REMEMBER to flip it back to “Unoccupied” when you leave.

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• Fill out the sign in/out sheet to allow for contact tracing and exposure warnings.
• Limit your time in common rooms to allow others to access them efficiently and effectively.

Research Lab Spaces:
• Prior to resuming research activities and opening lab spaces, **PIs must submit a detailed restart plan** to the Department Chair and Manager, and the Dean of Science.
• Only perform wet work in lab spaces. Conduct the majority of data analysis/computer work at home, unless there is downtime between experimental wait times.
• Labs should only have fully trained researchers. Undergraduate trainees may be considered if they have taken all appropriate safety training and will be supervised by more senior lab personnel at all times.
• For non-lab personnel who have inquiries for a specific lab, knock on the lab door if there is a 2m marking outside and step back behind the line. A lab member will come to the door to speak with you.
• Wear disposable, protective gloves and appropriate PPE when working in the lab or Core facility.
• Frequently disinfect gloves with 70% ethanol or isopropyl alcohol.
• Remove and dispose of gloves and disposable masks using proper techniques when leaving the lab.
• One person per instrument/equipment at a time. Disinfect before and after the use of shared equipment and work surfaces.
  o Post an “IN USE” sign if using the shared equipment over a period of time and if not present. **REMOVE** the sign upon finishing.
• Personnel should work in shifts in order to comply with distancing requirements, and within normal work hours if possible.
  o Communicate effectively prior to the day to allow for a minimum of 30 minutes between shift changes to avoid contact with other colleagues.
  o If working alone, follow **Policy GP 39 (Working alone or in isolation)**.
• Be prepared to shut down at the end of each day, as sudden provincial, federal or university directives or other circumstances may arise.
• Work in labs and other spaces that are not in use to help in physical distancing, if permissible. Spaces must be disinfected before use.
• Conduct lab meetings by Zoom or with distancing if a small group. Avoid physical meetings in bottleneck areas.
• Use a lab disinfection checklist to include common points of contact (e.g. door handles, sink handles, drawer and fridge/freezer handles, light switches, chairs) and designate specific personnel to disinfect between shifts as necessary. Use a sign-off sheet to document disinfection.
• Conduct periodic inspections to ensure compliance within labs and common spaces.
• Reduce the presence of janitorial staff inside the labs by placing filled regular waste containers and paper recycling bins in the hallway outside the lab at the end of the day. Designate personnel as necessary.
• Biohazard waste collection is on a bi-weekly schedule.

The safe return to research activities is only successful with everybody’s compliance and participation in these safety requirements. If any circumstances reveal ambiguities in this protocol, please notify Deidre de Jong-Wong (deidre@sfu.ca); the protocol may be updated when needed.