

Physical Distancing Guidelines in Research Labs

Stay home if you get sick

Lab workers should remain home if they are sick.

Physical Distancing

Maintain a 6-foot physical separation between lab workers whenever possible, as referenced in OSU's Policy 04-040, "Physical Distancing During COVID-19 Pandemic." If you have questions or concerns, email ehs@oregonstate.edu.

Item	Recommendations
Benchtop work in open lab areas	Assign staff only to alternating bench stations, have them work in different parts of the laboratory to maintain physical separation. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove chairs or label chairs to prevent use to provide separation between researchers when they are at the workbench. If workers are working on back-to-back benches (backs facing each other), stagger workspaces in a zigzag pattern.
Work in small rooms (≥6 feet between workers impossible)	EH&S recommends restricting lab rooms where workers cannot consistently be ≥6 feet apart to only one person at a time. Creating a staggered work schedule for staff can assist with maintaining proper physical distancing.
Working in neighboring fume hoods and biosafety cabinets	Staff should avoid work in adjacent fume hoods or biosafety cabinets if physical distancing cannot be maintained. Staff should use alternate equipment if available or wait in turn for use.
Shared equipment	Place markers on the floor to identify 6 feet of separation when queuing up for the use of shared equipment.

Many of your normal lab practices double as effective infection control measures:

- Consistent glove use provides a reminder to workers not to touch their face. Make sure that staff continue to wear the same PPE they use in normal circumstances.
- [Routine handwashing](#) — especially after removing gloves — prevents staff from spreading contamination from experiments onto clean surfaces. This also works well in limiting the spread of infectious agents.
- Disinfectants that are effective on other enveloped viruses will also inactivate SARS-CoV-2, providing the contact time is sufficient. The US Environmental Protection Agency maintains a website with up-to-date information on disinfectant products at <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/selected-epa-registered-disinfectants>
- Maintain customary [disinfection protocols](#) and consider increasing disinfecting more frequently touched surfaces in your lab that staff frequently contact.