

WORKING DURING COVID-19: BEST PRACTICES

General Recommendations:

The return to work in Lash Miller is on a voluntary basis and it should be clear that no one is required to return to work until the department is completely opened. No penalties should be assessed against anyone for declining to enter the building to continue on-site experimental work. A person that does not feel comfortable returning to work should continue to work remotely.

- Anyone who is sick or is awaiting results from a COVID-19 test should not attempt to enter Lash Miller under any circumstances.
- If you become unwell during the working day, please leave Lash Miller and report accordingly. If you notice a colleague appearing unwell, encourage them to go home and inform your direct supervisor.
- If you test positive for COVID-19 or have any other reason to believe you have been infected, please inform the department's Chair via email and let them know immediately who you have been in contact with and where you have been working.
- Anyone who is in a high-risk category (elderly, immuno-compromised, suffering from significant ailment, asthmatic, or has a respiratory ailment) or is living with someone in a high-risk category should stay away from Lash Miller.
- Before coming to Lash Miller, everyone should take the Ontario Government's [self-assessment online test](#). If the assessment indicates that you are in an at-risk group, you should self-isolate, or you should seek medical care, then you should not attempt to enter Lash Miller.
- **Non-Medical masks** (not face-shields) (visit [General-Workplace-Guideline-May-28-2020.pdf](#), page 30 for further information). It is recommended the use a non-medical mask to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 when physical distancing may be challenging or not possible – for example, while taking transit, visiting grocery stores or pharmacies, and when receiving essential services. Where physical distancing measures are in place, individuals who are not required to wear a mask for work purposes may choose to use a non-medical mask as an elective measure while on our campuses. If you have personnel that is required to be on-campus to conduct work and cannot maintain physical distancing, supervisors may contact EHS to request a risk assessment, after which employees would be provided with the appropriate mask for the work being performed.
- Cloth face masks should not be worn all the time; as soon as it becomes damp it is no longer effective.

- **Non-medical face masks must not be used instead of medical-grade masks** (e.g. N95 or surgical masks) where required by EHS to either conduct research or where physical distancing measures are not possible.
- The use of cloth face masks is allowed when handling chemicals with the exception of handling ***flammable and pyrophoric*** chemicals.
- The Department strongly encourage the use of face covering in common areas such as hallways, stairwells, washrooms, elevators, when distancing cannot be secured. To support this, Chemistry will provide at no cost 2 cloth face masks; and, if requested, one face shield research personnel and staff (St George Campus ONLY). Loss or damage that requires replacement will be at the cost of the Principal Investigator or Unit's manager.
- Please note, transient interactions have not been shown to create a material risk of exposure to COVID-19. Walking by someone with COVID-19 or being briefly in the same room at less than 2 meters is not considered contact and is not believed to put an individual at materially increased risk of infection. Therefore, non-medical masks are not thought to be of use in these situations.
- Wearing gloves (outside of the lab) is not recommended by Public Health and does not add significant protection. When people wear gloves all the time, they tend to get so used to wearing the gloves that they touch their faces with the gloves as if they were not wearing them. Microorganisms on our hands can multiply to unnatural levels when we wear gloves for extended periods. It is also common for people to contaminate themselves when removing gloves. Wearing clean gloves outside the lab is, however, suggested for the purposes of delivering a sample or other material to someone else in the department.
- Surfaces that are frequently touched by more than one person, such as doorknobs, lab phones, must be disinfected frequently. DO NOT use a flammable disinfectant or sanitizer on any electrical device such as elevator buttons or light switches, as the vapours may ignite. Those in common areas are the responsibility of the building manager or their delegate. Those in laboratories and offices are the responsibility of the occupants of those rooms. Computer keyboards should be protected by a thin plastic or silicone keyboard cover (Saran Wrap for example), which is far easier to disinfect than an unprotected keyboard.



REMEMBER: Never trust a surface you touch, irrespective of when it may have been cleaned.

- Physical distancing of at least 2 m (6 ft) must be practiced in stairwells, hallways, entryways, shipping/receiving areas, and other common areas of Lash Miller. *F&S will be placing arrows, and signs to manage flow within the building.*
- If you meet someone in a stairwell, the person closest to a door should go to the door to allow the other person to pass.
- If you meet someone in a hallway, the person closest to a retreat zone should go into the retreat zone to allow the other person to pass. (A retreat zone is a wider area of the

corridor where passing is possible while maintaining a 2 m separation, Lash Miller's St. George entrance vestibule for example).

- It is discouraged the use of common fridges, microwaves, and kitchenettes. Viable alternatives are for lab personnel to bring their own cooler with food needed for the duration of the experiment.

References: U of T-EHS, Institute for Sustainable Labs, Returning to Operations during COVID19 Townhall (Astra Zeneca, OSHA, Lilly, Yale, Charles River, Ultragenyx)