

## COVID-19 Return to Work – Safety Plan Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute

The Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute (VCHRI) is the research arm of Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) and an Institute within the University of British Columbia (UBC). Our research focus is on innovation and discoveries that improve patient health, transform health systems, and directly impact health and economic outcomes and we are located within VCH. The VCHRI administration office is located at the Robert H. N. Ho Research Centre at VGH, 6/F 2635 Laurel Street, Vancouver, BC, V5Z 1M9.

VCHRI researchers conduct a combination of wet lab, dry lab, pre-clinical, clinical and administrative research. Much of the clinical research takes place directly on patient wards within VCH and in clinic/community settings. This return to work safety plan covers all VCH research sites including VGH, UBC Hospital, Djavad Mowafaghian Centre for Brain Health, GF Strong, Coastal, Richmond and Vancouver Community.

The purpose of this plan is to provide guidance to our VCHRI unit leaders to allow research personnel to return to their laboratories, workspaces and clinics in a staged manner using physical distancing and appropriate safety measures. Restrictions are being implemented to mitigate risks and ensure compliance with federal and provincial regulations and UBC/VCH Policies and guidelines related to COVID-19. Ensuring the health and well-being of faculty, students, staff, and patients and public is our top priority.

It is understood that COVID-19 directives will change to accommodate the rapidly evolving situation. Staged resumption of activity may need to be reversed and stricter curtailment conditions imposed in response to public health guidance or changes to the situation at any particular site. In this event, VCHRI will notify Centre Directors (and Department Heads where no Centres exist) and Centre Directors will be responsible to implement a ramp down of activities within a specified timeframe.

### Overview and rationale for opening

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, research was curtailed on March 24, 2020; all personnel were advised to work from home where possible and on-site research was stopped. The only exceptions to continue for on-site research which were authorized for high priority/critical access during the curtailment met the following criteria:

- COVID-19 research-related
- Maintenance of critical research material that cannot otherwise be preserved (e.g. cells lines, tissue samples, etc.)
- Long-running research that is at a critical stage or close to an end-point
- Access to provide maintenance of critical equipment (-80 freezers, incubators, etc), top up of liquid nitrogen stocks and moving samples into appropriate storage containers

We also recognized the need to minimize any burden that clinical trials and clinical research activity can create for our health care system and implemented efforts to reduce, minimize or eliminate risks related to research participants and the public. Effective April 30, 2020 VCHRI suspended the initiation of new

clinical trials and clinical research and halted recruitment for new and ongoing clinical trials and studies. Only those clinical research trials/studies which met the following criteria received on-site exemptions:

- Involved COVID-19 research
- Current research activity exemptions, as listed above and previously approved by VCHRI
- Ongoing clinical trials concurrent with clinical care

As recently issued by the Provincial Health Officer, a slow and gradual resumption of research can begin.

For Stage 1 – resumption of research, VCHRI has implemented the UBC and Health Authorities Resumption Guidelines (see Appendix A) and a mandated cap of 30% normal occupancy (for non-clinical areas) where the services within each building will be staffed at reduced levels. It is important to note VCHRI is authorizing resumption of **research** activities. This does not include teaching or education; these areas would be approved through the Faculty of Medicine, UBC.

Occupancy for clinical areas is coordinated and approved with VCH. All personnel who are able to work remotely must continue to do so. For those who cannot, equity and circumstances will be considered in evaluating how to plan and conduct resumption of on-site activities.

Further details are as follows:

### **Prioritization guidelines of on-site activities**

- COVID-19 research
- Current research activity exemptions as approved previously (no new research or additional related activities).
- Clinical trials concurrent with clinical care
- Graduate students who need to be on-site to complete lab work for graduation as determined by the student's Supervisory Committee for completion of thesis.
- Positions required to run core research facilities that are essential for approved on-site research.
- Upcoming time sensitive activities that cannot be done remotely and require on-site research access.
- Equity considerations for those that cannot work from home for various circumstances.
- Non-time sensitive activities that cannot be done remotely for limited access.

The VCHRI process will adjudicate all resumption requests taking into account priority based on the above guidelines, physical distancing, overall building occupancy, PPE availability (where required), coordination with VCH services and the VCH/PHC COVID-19 Recovery Planning Framework, and the ability to meet and implement appropriate safety measures for all research personnel. Prior to re-occupancy and for non-clinical research, each Centre Director (or Department Head where no Centre exists) will submit a Summary/Safety Plan along with the VCHRI Unit Level Research Access Summary Excel spreadsheets to VCHRI at [research@vch.ca](mailto:research@vch.ca). Where animals are to be used a separate VCHRI animal research resumption access request must be included. Each plan will be reviewed by an internal review committee who will then approve for compliance with UBC, VCH, WorkSafe BC and regulatory requirements. Following the committee recommendation, VCHRI will coordinate a review with VCH, and where supported, VCH will co-approve the plan. Where concerns are expressed, VCHRI will contact the Centre to request changes/ updates and request a resubmission. Upon final approval VCHRI will issue a notification letter co-approved by VCHRI and VCH authorizing the re-start summary plan to the Centre Director (or Department Head) and for further dissemination to researchers. Approval for on-site activities will only be granted to those who require on-site resources and cannot conduct this work remotely.

Centre Directors will be responsible to ensure on-going monitoring and compliance with approved plans. Projects that require Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) but where PPE is not available may not proceed.

Where pre-clinical or human research is not yet approved, a Centre may be granted conditional approval to re-start projects that do not fall under these categories.

Re-Occupancy for **clinical research** must follow the process outlined in our memo <https://www.vchri.ca/sites/default/files/memo-vchriresumptionofhumansubjectresearch-20200611.pdf> and include the VCHRI Unit Level Research Access Summary for Human Subject Research. Adjudication will follow the process as indicated above. Note requests for access to the Gordon and Leslie Diamond Health Care Centre (DHCC) require additional information/coordination with VCH – if you need access to DHCC please use the **VCHRI DHCC Unit Level Research Access Summary for Human Subject Research** spreadsheet. (For those who require access to multiple buildings, you can include all buildings on the DHCC spreadsheet only but exclude the DHCC tab for non-DHCC buildings.) Both spreadsheets can be found at <https://www.vchri.ca/covid-19-information-and-faqs>.

Further stages of research resumption will align with provincial, university and health authority guidance.

## Regulatory Context

### 1. Federal Guidance

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>

### 2. Provincial and Sector-Specific Guidance – BC's Restart Plan: "next steps to move BC through the pandemic"

[https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/gdx/bcs\\_restart\\_plan\\_web.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/gdx/bcs_restart_plan_web.pdf)

### 3. Worksafe BC Guidance

COVID-19 and returning to safe operation – Phase 2

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation>

WorkSafe BC COVID-19 Safety Plan Template

[https://www.vchri.ca/sites/default/files/worksafe\\_covid-19-safety-plan-pdf-en\\_5.pdf](https://www.vchri.ca/sites/default/files/worksafe_covid-19-safety-plan-pdf-en_5.pdf)

WorkSafe: Designing Effective Barriers

[https://www.vchri.ca/sites/default/files/covid-19-health-safety-designing-effective-barriers-pdf-en\\_1.pdf](https://www.vchri.ca/sites/default/files/covid-19-health-safety-designing-effective-barriers-pdf-en_1.pdf)

WorkSafe: Entry Check for Workers

[https://www.vchri.ca/sites/default/files/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-entry-check-workers-pdf-en\\_2.pdf](https://www.vchri.ca/sites/default/files/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-entry-check-workers-pdf-en_2.pdf)

WorkSafe: Entry Check for Visitors (Visitors are not authorized to be on-site for Stage 1 – this is provided for exceptions and for future resumption stages.)

[https://www.vchri.ca/sites/default/files/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-entry-check-visitors-pdf-en\\_2\\_1.pdf](https://www.vchri.ca/sites/default/files/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-entry-check-visitors-pdf-en_2_1.pdf)

### 4. UBC Guidance – See "Training" Section – page 18.

### 5. Professional/Industry Associations - None

## Risk Assessment

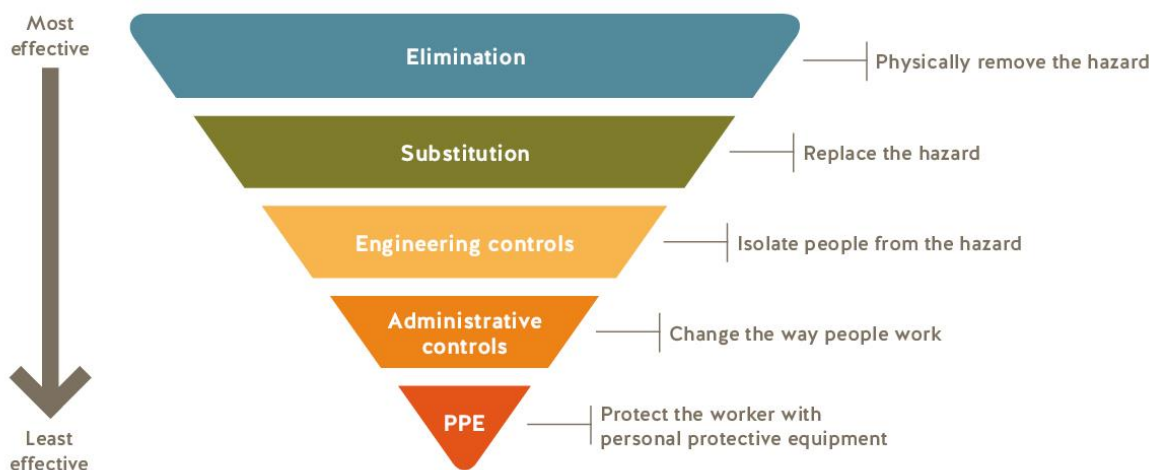
Coronavirus is transmitted via larger liquid droplets when a person coughs or sneezes, but also, potentially, when they are talking in very close proximity to another person. The virus in these droplets then can enter the body of another person when that person breathes in the droplets or when the droplets touch the eyes, nose or throat of that person. This requires you to be in close contact – less than social distancing of 2 metres. This is referred to as droplet transmission and is believed to be the primary way COVID-19 is transmitted.

In addition, droplet transmission is much more likely when in close contact in an indoor setting. COVID-19 can also be transmitted through droplets in the environment if someone touches a contaminated area, then touches their face or eyes without cleaning their hands. Unfortunately, humans touch their mouths, noses, and eyes with a very high level of frequency per hour. This speaks to the importance of regularly cleaning one's hands and also cleaning high-touch areas in the environment.

Different protocols offer different levels of protection. Wherever possible, use the protocol that offers the highest level of protection. Consider controls from additional levels if the first level isn't practicable or does not completely control the risk. There will likely be a need to incorporate controls from various levels to address the risk within the workplace.

The following diagram reflects the hierarchy of controls:

### Hierarchy of controls



The following general practices will be applied within all VCHRI research related buildings and sites:

### Reducing Transmission - Core Measures for Personal Self Care

- All staff and visitors to any VCHRI site are required to complete the [BC COVID-19](https://bc.thrive.health/) Self Assessment Tool at <https://bc.thrive.health/> daily and follow the direction provided. If you have the symptoms of a cold, flu, or COVID-19, including a cough, sneezing, runny nose, sore throat, or fatigue, you must stay at home (not going to school/work) and keep a safe distance from others in your family until those symptoms have completely disappeared. Contact HealthLink BC at 811 for further information.

- VCHRI actively promotes good hygiene (frequent hand washing with soap and water and use of hand sanitizers; avoid touching one's face; respiratory etiquette; disinfect frequently touched surfaces). Signage is also posted in elevators, washrooms, kitchens, and other areas throughout the facility.
- Wave instead of handshaking
- Maintain physical distancing of at least 2 metres when possible.
- A further consideration is for individuals at risk of a more severe illness (because they are over 60 years old, have compromised immune systems, or underlying chronic medical conditions) to properly inform themselves of risk, assess their own risk-tolerance, and think through extra precautions they may wish to take over the coming months.

## **Reducing Transmission – Core Measures to Implement Safe Practices**

Assessing the risk of transmission from social interaction in organizational settings and public institutions is a function of two variables supported by a range of actions we can take to further reduce the risk of transmission by addressing the following questions:

1. What is the contact intensity in your setting – the type of contact (close/distant) and duration of contact (brief/prolonged)? Where people congregate; what job tasks require close proximity; what surfaces are touched often; what tools, machinery, and equipment people coming into contact with at work:

All staff are encouraged to work from home where possible to reduce “contact intensity” and “number of contacts” in the workplace. In conjunction with Human Resource guidance, accommodations will also be taken into consideration for higher-risk staff including those 65+ and those with underlying medical conditions, those who have commuting concerns (such as public transit), childcare or elder care concerns.

Where there is a requirement to be on-site, VCHRI has:

- Encouraged the use of staggered shifts or work hours and (where applicable – such as administrative work) have less contacts by creating smaller teams working together virtually
- Established a requirement to close lunch areas to reduce socialization and transmission of the virus. It is recognized that some students who work in labs may where food must not be consumed may require a separate area for breaks (such as when working on longer experiments). Limited seating areas that are clearly marked for physical distancing requirements are available in each building for this purpose.
- Buildings are closed to visitors. Lobbies have marked areas (2 metre / 6 foot increments) designating where delivery personnel/service vendors must stand in order to wait for elevators where stairs are not possible.
- Elevators are reduced to 1 or 2 person occupancy and are clearly marked.
- Meetings must be held virtually except where 2 metre / 6 foot physical distancing can be accommodated. Seminars, lectures, workshops and poster sessions must be virtual, cancelled or post-phoned.
- Research participants (where research has been approved for re-entry) who must be seen on-site must be pre-screened and scheduled in advance to limit and reduce congestion in waiting areas, elevators, etc. Studies involving research participants in groups (such as exercise classes) must be changed to virtual classes/meetings or observe physical distancing requirements.

- Shared equipment rooms (such as tissue culture rooms, microscope rooms, or the lenti-virus room) will have occupancy signage posted and must use a shared calendar system or sign-in sheets.
- Wet labs must allocate benches following physical distancing requirements (2 meter/6 foot) – usually one person diagonally on opposite sides of each bench. Job tasks that require close proximity must contact UBC Safety and Risk Services to assess where Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) may be required in accordance with UBC Guidance on COVID-19.
- Staff should limit unnecessary travel between rooms/areas

Clinical areas will follow the requirements as coordinated with VCH under the VCH/PHC COVID-19 Recovery Planning Framework and located at the following website:

<http://ipac.vch.ca/Pages/Emerging-Issues.aspx>

Principal Investigators are responsible for ensuring that their research staff are trained in appropriate cleaning protocols for their lab/research space, including cleaning high contact surfaces, benches, shared equipment, fume hood sash handles, doorknobs and other common areas within their labs. In addition, Principal Investigators are responsible for providing ongoing supervision of the area, including training on new work procedures.

2. Contact Number (proposed COVID-19 Operations) – Describe the number of contacts in your proposed COVID-19 operational setting (# of people present in setting at same time).

Occupancy has been limited to approximately 30% capacity in research buildings and requires physical distancing of at least 2 meters / 6 feet. Clinical areas must align with VCH guidelines and are coordinated between VCHRI through VCH Directors and patient services managers to address the inclusion of patients/research subjects.

While a space's footprint/square footage may determine the maximum number of people, areas that have a lot of equipment, benches, machinery or obstructions may accommodate fewer people in order to adhere to physical distancing requirements. There are many ways to calculate the maximum number of people for a given space in order to meet this objective; the following example was provided to Centre Directors to determine space allocation: a general guideline is 12 m<sup>2</sup>/person and number of available lab benches/work stations.

### **Risk Level Determination (H/M/L) – Identify the COVID-19 risk category pre-mitigations for your operation using the BC COVID-19 Go Forward Management Strategy Risk Matrix.**

Based on 30% occupancy limits which have been implemented for all research buildings, and the additional hierarchy of controls to be implemented, the risk for VCHRI operations are considered to be low risk post mitigation.

### **Reducing Transmission – Core Measures to Implement Safe Organizational Practice**

Discussion with staff in the work area for awareness and education of infection risks and work activities are encouraged on a regular basis.

**First Level Protection (Elimination) – Limit the number of people in the workplace where possible by implementing work-from-home arrangements, establishing occupancy limits, rescheduling work tasks, or other means. Rearrange work spaces to ensure that workers are at least 2 m (6 ft) from co-workers, customers, and members of the public.**

- VCHRI actively promotes and encourages monitoring of personal self-care actions. Centre Directors must ensure staff who are sick/experiencing “flu-like” symptoms are advised not to come into work and signage is posted at building entrances. Those who think they may be sick are referred to their doctor, 811 or the self-assessment tool <https://bc.thrive.health/>.
- Staff who have travelled internationally or have been in contact with anyone who has travelled, or who has contracted COVID-19 must self-isolate for 14 days.
- VCHRI has implemented the following core measures for managing social interaction:
  - Visitors are prohibited during Stage 1, except those who require access for delivery drivers/service vendors to allow for goods and services to be received and/or to maintain critical, on-going maintenance of equipment or for certification of equipment. You must make arrangements in advance to meet with your party in shipping/receiving to reduce congregation in shared areas and ensure access to the building due to reduced staffing levels.
  - Staffing levels must be reduced to ensure compliance with physical distancing, safety measures and occupancy limits (30% maximum capacity). Where staff are unable to work remotely, consider adjusting work schedules/shifts or changing how tasks are done where possible. Staff parking will be limited on the VCH site as clinical services resume due to areas in parkades being reserved for patients.
  - Research subjects should only be scheduled for on-site visits where virtual appointments are not possible; where the latter they must be pre-screened using the appropriate screening and assessment process (see <http://ipac.vch.ca/Pages/Emerging-Issues.aspx>) and pre-scheduled prior to coming on site and must be advised which access route/waiting area to use. Research subjects will not be permitted to participate if direction from Public Health requires them to self-isolate.
  - A supply of hand sanitizer should be provided at sign in and posters reminding of the importance of handwashing following contact with common touch surfaces. All staff are aware of proper handwashing and sanitizing procedures for their workspace. Workplace and signage for proper hand-washing procedures are also posted throughout.
  - Laptops and cell phones must be disinfected upon arrival at work and should be cleaned and disinfected upon departure.
  - Meeting rooms are closed except to use for confidential teleconferences and/or where physical distancing can be accommodated. Occupancy limits must be posted and furniture removed from use/clearly identified where it doesn't meet physical distancing requirements.
  - Seminars/lectures/conferences/workshops and other sessions must be provided virtually/on-line or post-poned.
  - Kitchens are closed. Staff are encouraged to have or obtain meals off-site or outdoors. Some limited areas will be provided for on-site food consumption where staff are unable to go off-site. These areas will have occupancy limits posted and physical distancing requirements will be marked. All shared cutlery and tableware must be removed if an adequate means of sanitation is not available. Food should not be shared. Cloth towels must be removed.
  - Equipment must be wiped down between use (where applicable) and pens should not be shared.
  - Staff are directed to stay on the right when using hallways and stairwells unless they are designated (signage/markings) otherwise. Where possible, designated travel paths will be marked so workers do not have to pass each other closely or have workers call out before entering shared spaces.
  - Staff must not congregate in common areas. Minimize physical interactions in the building.
  - On-Campus research during Stage 1 should be restricted to experienced research personnel.
  - Housekeeping must be provided access to perform cleaning and disinfection of our spaces, including high-touch areas. Their shifts start at approximately 5:30 pm until approximately 11:30 pm weekdays and research staff must not impede this access.

**Second Level Protection (Engineering): Barriers and Partitions – if you can't always maintain physical distancing, install barriers such as adding additional furniture to extend the physical distance between individuals (i.e. place a 2<sup>nd</sup> desk or filing cabinet in front of a workstation to create additional distance.)**



- Physical distancing (2 metres) must be maintained for on-site activities
- VCH Infection control does not approve of the installation of plexi-glass partitions or other barriers or renovations to most areas within the health authority (except for food service, etc). High volume areas should be marked with tape or signage to delineate appropriate locations for physical distancing, furniture placement can be adjusted or consider relocating staff or services to an alternate area where physical distancing can be maintained.
- Eliminate communal storage areas for employees' personal belongings, and instead provide separate sealable bins or lockers.
- Lobbies should not have people congregating and are marked to outline physical distancing requirements in 6 foot increments.
- Elevator capacity is reduced – maximum occupancy signage is posted at each elevator and floor markings have been installed.
- Washrooms are designated as single-use only
- Shared equipment (such as tissue culture, microscope, core equipment, etc) and other rooms (such as large open areas with high-density workstations) must be assessed for maximum occupancy limits and occupancy capacity signage must be posted. On-line calendars or sign-up sheets must be used to schedule rooms with high volume usage.
- Points of Access to VCHRI research buildings is provided using key cards and will remain locked during Stage 1.
- Where possible (no violation of fire codes, containment zones, etc), inside doors will be propped open so employees do not have to touch handles.

**Third Level Protection (Administrative Controls): Rules and Guidelines (including posted occupancy limits for shared spaces, designated delivery areas, cleaning practices, and one-way doors and walkways to keep people physically separated)**

**General:**

- Buildings will open at 7:00 am until 5:30 pm. Housekeeping starts their shift at approximately 5:30 pm and must be not be impeded.
- All personnel must wear their photo id at all times. Only those with authorization may be on site. **Do not provide access to anyone and do not let anyone follow you through doors/elevators.**
- Proper attire must be worn
- It is recognized that a small number of researchers have scientifically justified research protocols that require sampling/observations/data collection over an extended period of time and beyond regular working hours. In this event the following will apply:
  - Housekeeping must not be impeded or prevented from completing their work.
  - Principal Investigators must implement an SOP and staff must be trained on said documents, to perform cleaning and disinfection procedures for the areas used after custodial staff have completed their work. (This includes cleaning high contact surfaces, benches, shared equipment, fume hood sash handles, doorknobs and other common areas within their labs.)
  - A Work Alone Policy must be implemented for any staff working on their own. (No staff can work alone without one.)
- Supervisors must use a schedule and/or sign/in out sheet to identify, manage and maintain on-site access.
- Supervisors must monitor that staff are aware to check their health every day prior to coming to work, ensure that all workers have been properly trained in all through courses and procedures to perform their duties and have access to dedicated onsite supervision at all times (with the exception of the implementation of a Work Alone Policy).
- All shared equipment, fume hood sashes, computer keyboards, and other high-contact areas must be wiped down with disinfectant prior to and following use

**Common Spaces/Hallways/Washrooms, etc.**



- Use of common rooms must be controlled carefully by Centres (Departments). Where rooms are not closed, chairs will be removed to limit the number of people who can sit in accordance with physical distancing standards
- Centre (Department)-bookable meeting rooms/exercise rooms/gyms, lecture halls, etc should be blocked off from access for Stage 1 unless there is a need to keep them open and then must follow physical distancing requirements
- Washrooms are designated as single use only
- Busy or tight stairwells should be marked for ascending or descending between floors (of course this will not apply in an emergency, such as a fire)
- Hallways should follow directional signage – where not available staff must stay on the right
- Spaces for eating must have signage to indicate the maximum number of people permitted and designated areas marked to maintain physical distancing
- Shipping/Receiving: where research staff are not on site regularly and delivery personnel do not have access to the buildings you must make arrangements in advance to coordinate delivery date/time/access. Consider sharing with another department to reduce the need for people to be on site for the same purpose.

### **Shared facilities**

- Access to shared facilities must be controlled using an on-line calendar, sign-in sheet or other method.
- Each shared room/core facility must have a sign posted that indicates the maximum number of people that can be inside at a time.
- Access to some facilities will be restricted to appointments made in advance
- Users MUST comply with procedures or access/services will be denied
- All shared equipment, fume hood sashes, computer keyboards, and other high-contact areas must be wiped down with disinfectant prior to and following use
- Shared workstations should be minimized where possible to reduce cross-interaction with surfaces.
- If microwaves or other cooking equipment are being used, there must be signage to reinforce cleaning protocols (e.g., users disinfecting the handles and buttons) and there must be supplies available there for this purpose.

### **Wet Labs**

Occupancy of labs and shared office spaces inside of them must be restricted by PIs based on their “Request to Restart Research” form so that all research personnel can work 2 metres apart. Where the space is occupied by research personnel from multiple groups, the PIs must jointly coordinate this. The number of people that can work in a lab simultaneously will therefore depend on the individual lab configuration (i.e. area / geometry / bays), but units must aim for an occupancy of about  $\frac{1}{3}$  for Phase 1. The maximum occupancy of each lab must be posted on the door. While practicing physical distancing, it is important to ensure that research personnel are not working alone in labs where this is normally prohibited. PIs are responsible for ensuring that there is a work schedule to cover this and where an individual must work alone an SOP must be implemented and the worker trained. On-site supervision should be arranged – potentially jointly or by designation of more senior lab personnel scheduled. People in common areas (e.g., group rooms, instrument rooms) must also adhere to physical distancing.

### **Dry Labs/Offices**

Dry labs are labs with specialized equipment that cannot be used off campus. Occupancy of dry labs must be restricted by PIs (as described in their “Request to Restart Research” form) so that all research personnel can work 2 m apart. Where the space is occupied by research personnel from multiple groups, the PIs must jointly coordinate this. The number of people that can work in a lab simultaneously will therefore depend on the individual lab configuration (area / geometry / bays), but both PIs and units must aim for an occupancy of less than  $\frac{1}{3}$  for Stage 1. The maximum occupancy of each lab must be posted

on the door. People in common areas must also adhere to physical distancing. Temporary short access to offices (e.g. 10 -15 minutes for picking up a file, accessing an electronic folder) can be provided.

Administrative offices can be opened only if research needs cannot be fully supported remote access and must follow physical distancing requirements.

Access to computers on site may be limited where staff are working from home and using remote (VPN) access. (Only one person can access a computer at a time if the prime user is using VPN. This should be taken into consideration where computers on-site are expected to be used.)

A Centre (or Department) safety plan must include all areas occupied by your Centre/shared in your building (including administrative/staff areas) and must be approved and implemented through VCHRI (and VCH). It is the responsibility of Centres (or Departments) to ensure scheduling is performed in each area/building. The mode of data collection/sign-in (e.g. paper or an on-line document should be available in case there is a need to determine who is on-site at any given time.

### **Jack Bell Research Centre (JBRC)**

- South Passenger Elevator – 1 person max occupancy
- North Freight Elevator – 2 person max occupancy
- MAF elevator – 2 people and will depend on the size of the items being transported. Physical distancing must be maintained.
- Meeting rooms – closed
- Lunch rooms - where staff are unable to go off-site the following may be used:
  - Lunch Rm 507 – max 1 person
  - Seminar Rm 237 – 1 person per table – max 5 people occupancy
  - No sharing of food, plates, cups, cutlery and no cloth towels
- Access to Medical Animal Facilities must have approval for resumption requests and must book access 48 hours in advance with MAF staff. Occupancy is calculated using total (combined) number of MAF staff and research staff in the facility at any given time. MAF elevator has a 2 person occupancy max and will depend on the size of items being transported.

### **Robert Ho Research Centre (RHHH)**

- Elevator – 1 person max occupancy
- Meeting rooms closed
- Kitchen – closed. Where staff are unable to go off-site the following may be used:
- 7th floor kitchen
- Lounge 792 – closed
- 6th floor – closed; seating area is limited to 2 person max occupancy on the bridge
- 273 coffee area – 1 person max occupancy
- no sharing of food, plates, cutlery and no cloth towels; seating must follow physical distancing requirements

**Atrium** - between JBRC and RHHH – 1 person per table

- Magazines have been removed
- 1 person limit per table

*Do not move the furniture out of current configuration in any of the meeting rooms or atrium – it has been placed to accommodate physical distancing requirements. Signage is posted and areas are marked throughout.*

### **Research Pavilion (RP)**

- Meeting rooms – Fume hood/histology room – 5<sup>th</sup> floor – max 1 person occupancy and you must sign in/out using the calendar at: <https://www.brownbears.wisc.edu/cal/rp587>

- Makerspace/Tool room #668 – 1 person max occupancy and must use sign-up sheet outside the door
- Individual tissue culture rooms (where not part of a lab) – 1 person max occupancy
- Kitchen – limited access (1 person per table), no sharing of food, no plates, cups, cutlery, etc and no use of cloth towels
- Mailroom – 1 person max occupancy
- Elevators (both passenger elevators) – 1 person max occupancy
- Freight elevator – 2 person and depends on the size of items being transported. Physical distancing requirements must be maintained.

*Signage is posted to support physical distancing requirements and areas are marked throughout.*

## **Other buildings**

All other buildings on the VCH site are shared with clinical services and or external vendors. Congestion in lobbies, elevators, waiting rooms, etc must be avoided with staff using stairs or back entrances and patients/research subjects being pre-booked. ICORD staff must use the back entrance for access. Eye Care Centre is looking at a similar method of access for research staff. Patients and/or Research Participants who cannot be seen virtually must be pre-screened and scheduled prior to accessing the site. Coordination with VCH is in progress and is monitored weekly to address these items. All on-site clinical research activities must follow the VCH/PHC COVID-19 Recovery Planning framework at <http://ipac.vch.ca/Pages/Emerging-Issues.aspx> and must be incorporated into all clinical research resumption plans.

## **Emergency Procedures - Responding to COVID-19 Incident(s)**

In the event of an emergency, follow your individual Centre emergency procedures as well as the guidelines listed below, while maintaining appropriate physical distancing as possible.

## **What to do in the event of a medical emergency**

A medical emergency can be comprised of any number of things, think heart attacks, broken bones, loss of consciousness etc. If you find yourself in a medical emergency situation:

- Call **911** immediately
- Clearly answer any questions the phone operator asks you
- Then call **604-677-3672** or **5800** (VCH landlines) to notify **Paladin Security** as the First Aid responder who will likely arrive on scene before an ambulance

For all other emergencies please dial 7111 and advise you would like to activate a code (codes are outlined as follows for easy reference):

# Colour Code Quick Reference Guide

> To activate a code dial 7111

Refer to the site Emergency Response and Code Manual for site specific procedures and how they apply

Code		Who can activate	Who responds	What to do
<b>Red</b>	<b>Fire</b>	Anyone discovering smoke or fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff</li> <li>Code Red Response Team</li> <li>Fire Department</li> </ul>	Follow RACE procedures: <b>R</b> emove people <b>A</b> ctivate alarm <b>C</b> ontain smoke/fire <b>E</b> xtinguish/Evacuate
<b>Blue*</b>	<b>Cardiac Arrest Medical Emergency</b> * Adult/Pediatric where applicable	Anyone who finds a person in an immediate medical emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code Blue Team</li> </ul>	Make way for Code Blue Team, give assistance as directed
<b>White</b>	<b>Violence/Aggressive Behaviour</b>	Anyone who witnesses violent/aggressive behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code White Team</li> <li>Security</li> </ul>	Assist as trained to do so or as directed
<b>Yellow</b>	<b>Missing Patient/Resident</b>	Charge Nurse/Designate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff</li> </ul>	Refer to missing patient/resident description, search area
<b>Green</b>	<b>Evacuation</b>	Administrator On-Call/Designate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff</li> </ul>	Prepare to assist with evacuation and/or receive patients in your work area
<b>Orange</b>	<b>Mass Casualty/Disaster</b>	Administrator On-Call/Designate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff</li> </ul>	Activate functional area or departmental plan as directed
<b>Black</b>	<b>Bomb Threat</b>	Administrator On-Call/Designate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff</li> <li>Security</li> <li>Police</li> </ul>	Give assistance as directed, conduct a visual search of your area for unusual objects
<b>Brown</b>	<b>Hazardous Spill</b>	Supervisor/Designate when spill/leak meets workplace health guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contracted Chemical Response Team</li> </ul>	Keep yourself and others away from spill
<b>Grey</b>	<b>System Failure</b>	Administrator On-Call/Designate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>System specialists</li> </ul>	Give assistance as directed, refer to downtime and code procedures
<b>Pink</b>	<b>Obstetric/Neonatal Emergency</b>	Clinical staff in designated units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code Pink Team</li> </ul>	Make way for Code Pink Team
<b>Amber</b>	<b>Missing or Abducted Infant/Child</b>	Manager/Designate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff</li> </ul>	Refer to missing or abducted infant/child description, search area

Consider your safety first in any emergency



#### **Fourth Level Protection - PPE: Using Masks (optional measure in addition to other control measures where the first three levels of protections aren't enough to control the risk)**

##### **Personal Protective Equipment - General**

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is used to protect employees from specific risks, however it is the least effective method of protecting employees, in accordance with the Hierarchy of Controls Diagram as referenced under the Risk Assessment section page 4 of this document and is only used to prevent injury and illness in workers when eliminating workplace hazards is not possible.

The minimum PPE requirements that an individual must wear in order to enter a UBC **wet laboratory** are:

- long loose fitting pants (long socks, leggings, nylons, and skinny jeans are not appropriate)
- Full Covering Liquid Resistant shoes (sandals, ballet flats, cloth, and mesh shoes are not appropriate)
- Lab coat that is buttoned and sleeves rolled down. When not in use, lab coats should be on a hook so it won't touch other lab coats.

##### **Non-medical Masks**

Non-medical masks are not classed as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and cannot be considered as part of workplace safety planning. UBC employees are permitted to use non-medical masks as a public health measure while at work, provided they do not prevent workers from carrying out their duties in a safe way. If using a non-medical mask at work it is important to [understand the limitations and risk associated with them](#).

Where specific PPE is deemed necessary but is not available, **that activity must not proceed**.

Information around the safe use of masks and other PPE at UBC can be found in the [UBC Employee COVID-19 PPE Guidance document](#). PPE will be provided to employees if and where it is required to perform work safely, only if risk is still present after implementing the controls above and where masks and other PPE is available.

The correct use of masks can be found on page 20.

The impact of COVID-19 on global supply chains, has caused a shortage of PPE, limiting UBC's access to these important supplies. Critical PPE can be ordered through the Critical Supply team:

- First submit an [eProcurement](#) form
- A member of the SRS team will then contact you to discuss your order.

##### **Clinical Research:**

All health-care workers whose roles require **direct contact with patients, clients and residents** are now required to wear surgical/procedural masks, eye protection and gloves when providing direct care to patients, clients and residents across VCH. This includes:

- All staff, medical staff and contracted staff with direct contact with patients, clients and residents in acute care, critical care, long-term care and community care. (**UBC Staff would fall under this category.**)
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be used where designated in clinical and pre-clinical areas.
- Gloves and gowns may not be worn in non-lab areas including elevators

Clinical areas must follow Infection Prevention and Control Guidelines for Personal Protective Equipment and Hand Hygiene in accordance with the following link: <http://ipac.vch.ca/Pages/Emerging-Issues.aspx>

## Health and Safety in the WorkPlace During Resumption of Research

The VCHRI Joint Health and Safety Committee brings together representatives of the employer (UBC and VCH) and frontline workers and supervisors to identify and help resolve health and safety issues in the workplace. There is at least one representative from each building on the Committee (except where they are clinical and fall under a VCH JOHSC) which meets on the first Thursday of every month. COVID-19 is a standing agenda item for discussion where issues such as PPE requirements/availability, physical barrier questions, occupancy, modified job tasks, etc are discussed. Where appropriate, specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) or protocols are developed and implemented throughout VCHRI. Committee members bring back information, updates, process change information for dissemination to their areas. Minutes from each meeting are posted on Health and Safety Boards in each building. VCHRI also circulates specific information and process changes via global e-mail distribution lists. Questions or concerns related to the resumption of research may be directed to any of the following committee members at the following link: [https://www.vchri.ca/sites/default/files/health\\_safety\\_committee\\_-\\_july\\_22\\_2019.pdf](https://www.vchri.ca/sites/default/files/health_safety_committee_-_july_22_2019.pdf). Further enquiries, guidance, investigation assistance or recommendations may also be provided via UBC Safety and Risk Services at [safety.risk@ubc.ca](mailto:safety.risk@ubc.ca) (for UBC Employees) or VCH Health and Safety at [EmployeeSafety@vch.ca](mailto:EmployeeSafety@vch.ca) for VCH Employees.)

This plan will be shared with the VCHRI Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee. The committee will have 30 days to review and provide feedback.

## Health and Well-Being of Staff

It's important to look after your mental health and well-being during COVID-19. Everyone is impacted and reacts differently to stress and change. Most of us have never endured a pandemic. Find tips and resources below to help you and your family.

There are a number of well-being and mental health support options available to both UBC and VCH staff:

- UBC Staff: <https://www.hr.ubc.ca/covid-19/>
- VCH Staff: (via the VCH intranet): <https://my.vch.ca/working-here/health-safety-wellness>

## Cleaning Protocols

Formal housekeeping is an extremely important safety measure. Crothall is the external vendor at VCH who is responsible for cleaning/sanitation/disinfection once each day in research areas and their workers must be provided with unimpeded access each weekday afternoon. This is particularly important to ensure high-touch areas and regular cleaning and disinfection can be addressed, leaving the space clean for the morning shift staff. The following schedules have been provided to us - [you must work around these times to allow housekeeping to perform their work:](#)

- Eye Care Centre: 4pm to 11 pm
- Jack Bell Research Centre: 5:30 pm to 11:30 pm
- Research Pavilion: 5:30 pm to 9 pm
- Robert Ho Research Centre: 5:30 pm to 11:30 pm

Other buildings include clinical spaces and may be on different schedules. Please connect with patient services manager to determine shift times for unlisted buildings.

All work areas should be kept clean, organized, and clear for easy disinfection. The following cleaning and hygiene requirements must also be implemented and used where necessary throughout each shift:

- All staff must be provided with a cleaning and disinfection protocol (consider using the UBC Safe Work Procedure – General Cleaning & Disinfection of Surfaces (found under additional SOP's and Training, Page 20 or other appropriate lab protocol) and training on said protocol. Special

consideration must take into account high-touch areas including washrooms, equipment, shared tables, desks, light switches, door handles, etc.

- Staff must wash their hands regularly upon entering a VCHRI/VCH facility and throughout their workday as required. Signage is posted in washrooms, kitchen areas, in elevators, on-line and other areas.
- Respiratory etiquette should be followed, such as coughing and sneezing into the elbow, avoid touching the face, mouth, nose or eyes. Posters are available at <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/posters/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-cover-coughs-sneezes?lang=en> and are posted throughout our facilities.
- Hand-sanitizers should be provided by each Centre (or Department) where not already provided by the VCH.
- Laptops and cellphones brought on site should be cleaned/disinfected by its user upon arrival and departure. Staff should be encouraged to clean and disinfect their own work space following protocols outlined in the Additional SOP's and Training section, page 20
- Benches and shared equipment (such as photocopier lids/buttons, autoclaves, fume hood sashes, etc) must be cleaned/disinfected between each user
- Kitchens are closed and plates, cutlery, etc and cloth towels have been removed.
- Equipment that is not required for use in Stage 1 should be removed or taped/closed off.
- Common surfaces should be wiped regularly with disinfection. Supplies will be made available by Centres (or Departments) so that this disinfection can be done by users.
- Plexi-glass/partitions are not approved via Infection Control and are not permitted in VCH buildings.

Working on evenings/weekends is not recommended, however, if you have essential work that must be carried out, appropriate cleaning/disinfection protocols (as referenced above) must be implemented with a special focus on high-touch areas to leave the building clean and disinfected for morning shift workers.

## Non-Compliance

The resumption of research activity at VCHRI will be managed in phases, which have been developed and articulated in close collaboration with UBC and VCH. To resume research activity successfully will require a commitment from the community to comply with the UBC and Health Authority Research Guiding Principles. Reporting of non-compliance to the guidelines is the responsibility of Centre Directors (or Department Heads) and will follow the processes outlined in the appended non-compliance information Appendix B.

## Policies

VCHRI recognizes that a positive safety culture in the workplace is essential to staff and patient/research subjects (where applicable) as we look to resume operations following the COVID-19 related research curtailment.

A positive safety culture promotes and maintains an environment where:

- Staff work in a safe manner at all times
- Staff report hazards and unsafe behaviours openly
- Rapid and effective actions are implemented to address risks

The Government of Canada has recommended that all Canadians who can work from home should. Where working from home is not possible, and to help avoid the transmission of COVID-19, the following applies to all staff who are approved to be on-site in accordance with their Centre (or Department) Research Resumption Plan:

### UBC Policies:

UBC Staff must comply with all UBC policies (<https://universitycounsel.ubc.ca/board-of-governors-policies-procedures-rules-and-guidelines/policies/>). In particular, the following must be adhered to:



## **Health and Safety Policy**

[http://universitycounsel-2015.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2019/08/Health-and-Safety-Policy\\_SC1.pdf](http://universitycounsel-2015.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2019/08/Health-and-Safety-Policy_SC1.pdf)

All workers must follow the guidance listed via the Provincial Government and must remain at home when sick in accordance with HealthLink BC: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-feature/coronavirus-disease-covid-19>. Staff are aware of this policy.

## **Bullying and Harrassment**

<https://bullyingandharassment.ubc.ca/>

## **Working Alone**

Staff are not recommended to work outside normal working hours (between 7 am to 5:30 pm). Where work is required outside the norm, and where staff will be on site alone, a Work Alone Policy must be developed, implemented, communicated and training must be provided prior to staff working entering the workplace. Information and guidance can be found at: <https://srs.ubc.ca/health-safety/safety-programs/personal-safety/6969-2/>

## **VCH Policies:**

VCH staff must comply with all VCH policies which can be found under (<http://shop.healthcarebc.ca/>), in particular, the following must be adhered to:

### **VCH Health and Safety Policy**

<http://shop.healthcarebc.ca/vch/VCHPolicies/D-00-11-30064.pdf>

### **VCH Respectful Workplace and Human Rights Policy**

<file:///G:/VCHRI/Administration%20-%20Office/Staff%20scheduling%20and%20info%20-%20COVID-19/Documents,%20memos%20and%20correspondence/VCH%20Respectful%20Workplace%20&%20Human%20Rights%20Policy.pdf>

## **Guidelines to address who can be working at VCHRI/VCH during Stage 1 Research Resumption**

It is important to understand who can be at the workplace, how to address illness that arises at the workplace and how workers can be kept safe in adjusted working conditions.

### **Staff/Employee Health (in accordance with the BCCDC):**

All workers must follow the guidance as outlined from the Provincial Government and must remain at home when sick in accordance with HealthLink BC: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-feature/coronavirus-disease-covid-19>. Staff are made aware of this policy and each Centre (Department) may have additional requirements to follow. All research staff must comply as follows:

- Staff who have travelled, been in contact with anyone who has returned from outside of Canada or who has had contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case, must self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
- Staff must check their health status each day before entering the workplace. Those who are sick or had symptoms in the last 10 days (symptoms include fever, chills, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, and new muscle aches or headache) must not come to work.
- Those who think they may be sick must notify their supervisor, and go to HealthLink BC at 811 or use the self-assessment tool <https://bc.thrive.health/>. Information regarding staff health is posted at: [https://www.vchri.ca/sites/default/files/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-entry-check-workers-pdf-en\\_2.pdf](https://www.vchri.ca/sites/default/files/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-entry-check-workers-pdf-en_2.pdf)
- Staff who develop symptoms while at work must notify their supervisor, wash their hands, be provided with a mask, call 811 and self-isolate. Call 911 where staff are severely ill (difficulty breathing, chest pain). All surfaces the staff member came in contact with must be cleaned and disinfected.

- VCH employees must also call the Provincial WorkPlace Call Centre (1-866-922-9464) and are strongly recommended to get tested.)
- The following poster “Help Prevent the spread of COVID-19: Entry check for workers” is a resource available for Centres (or Departments). <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/posters/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-entry-check-workers?lang=en>
- The following poster “Help Prevent the spread of COVID-19: Entry check for visitors” is a resource available for Centres (or Departments). While visitors are prohibited during Stage 1, delivery personnel or service people may fall under this category in shipping receiving areas, etc. <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/posters/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-entry-check-visitors?lang=en>
- Signage is posted at every VCH building entrance advising staff and visitors not to enter when they are sick.

### **Refusing unsafe work**

Workers have the right to refuse unsafe work. If you have reasonable cause to believe that performing a job or task puts you or someone else at risk, you must not perform the job or task. You must immediately notify your supervisor or employer, who will then take the appropriate steps to determine if the work is unsafe and remedy the situation. Please refer to one of the following links:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/careers-myhr/all-employees/safety-health-well-being/workplace/refusing-unsafe-work>

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/create-manage/rights-responsibilities/refusing-unsafe-work>

Members of the VCH Research Institute Joint Health and Safety Committee can be reached at: [https://www.vchri.ca/sites/default/files/health\\_safety\\_committee\\_-\\_july\\_22\\_2019.pdf](https://www.vchri.ca/sites/default/files/health_safety_committee_-_july_22_2019.pdf). Further guidance, investigation assistance or recommendations may also be provided via UBC Safety and Risk Services at [safety.risk@ubc.ca](mailto:safety.risk@ubc.ca) or VCH Health and Safety at [EmployeeSafety@vch.ca](mailto:EmployeeSafety@vch.ca).

### **Visitors**

Visitors are prohibited in the workplace

### **Pets**

Although there has not been any direction from Public Health, VCH has recommended staff not to bring their pets to work during the COVID pandemic since it's unclear whether pets transmit the disease to humans.

### **Communications and Training related to COVID-19**

VCHRI will submit the Return to Work/Safety Plan to UBC and VCH for review. The applicable JOHSC(s) will also review the plan either prior to submission or within 30 days of submission, and the plan will be revised as necessary.

VCHRI will circulate the approved plan by e-mail to all distribution lists. A hard copy of the approved VCHRI overall COVID-19 Return to Work Safety Plan will be posted at the VCHRI Administration Office on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the Robert Ho Research Centre. An electronic copy will also be posted on the VCHRI website at <https://www.vchri.ca/covid-19-information-and-faqs> and on the VCHRI JOHSC website.

Additionally, hardcopies will be posted on the central Health and Safety bulletin boards located in each building.

Each Centre Director (or Department Head) must implement a COVID-19 Safety Plan and can choose to adopt the VCHRI overall Safety Plan or develop one of their own (which must be submitted and approved via VCHRI). The plan must be circulated to all staff who must acknowledge receipt and agree to comply by signing off on the plan. Each Supervisor will retain a copy of the staff member acknowledgement of the safety plan in the staff employee file.

- The Centre Director must also post a copy of the plan in a clearly visible area and notify all staff of its posted location.
- All supervisors must provide a training plan and maintain a training record for all employees in their employee file.

Staff are encouraged to communicate all safety concerns related to the Resumption of Research to their Principal Investigators and/or Centre Directors. Where sensitive/confidential issues may require additional or external assistance, staff may contact:

- A member of the VCHRI Health and Safety Committee  
[https://www.vchri.ca/sites/default/files/health\\_safety\\_committee\\_-\\_july\\_22\\_2019.pdf](https://www.vchri.ca/sites/default/files/health_safety_committee_-_july_22_2019.pdf)
- or VCHRI at [research@vch.ca](mailto:research@vch.ca)
- or UBC Safety and Risk Services at [safety.risk@ubc.ca](mailto:safety.risk@ubc.ca)
- or VCH Health and Safety at [EmployeeSafety@vch.ca](mailto:EmployeeSafety@vch.ca).

Workers will be involved in resolving safety issues. The VCHRI Joint Health and Safety Committee and UBC Safety and Risk Services/VCH Health and Safety can also provide guidance and/or recommendations when not able to resolve internally.

Check in's and supports will also be made available via a combination of the following:

- Weekly team meetings (where appropriate)
- Team email broadcasts
- One-on-one meetings with direct supervisors
- JOHSC Meetings & Communications
- Supervisors are encouraged to disseminate information

Signage is posted at building entrances to advise:

- only those who have authorization to be on site may enter the facility
- those who have COVID-19 symptoms must refrain from entering the facilities
- occupancy limits
- and lobbies and other areas include handwashing and hygiene posters

Useful posters and signage can be found at the following link: <https://www.vchri.ca/services/health-and-safety>

## Training

Prior to returning to the workplace, all workers must review and acknowledge understanding of their approved Centre (or Department) Safety Plan. A copy of the safety plan must be posted in a visible location.

All UBC staff must complete the new mandatory *Preventing COVID-19 Infection in the Workplace* online training course: <https://wpl.ubc.ca/browse/srs/courses/wpl-srs-covid>. All other workers (not at worksite) will be required to complete it before they return to the workplace.

All staff must be provided with information and resources to assist them in ensuring the risk of exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19 is minimized at their workplace. All staff are provided with a training plan to ensure they are aware of and will abide by appropriate policies and procedures. Only experienced staff should be returning to site once the Centre has received approval of their Safety Plan. New workers should not be on-site for the Stage 1 Research Resumption Phase.

## Training Records

All supervisors must provide a training plan and maintain a training record for all employees in their employee file. The following template is an example which may have been used at the time of hire. You

may wish to consider updating it for returning employees to determine where employees may need to be re-certified or now require additional training.

<http://chbe.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2016/08/UBC-Workplace-Safety-Orientation-Safety-for-Young-New-Workers.pdf>

### **Mandatory Training - UBC**

Prior to returning to site, all staff must have received required mandatory training in addition to the “Preventing COVID-19 Infection in the Workplace” as referenced above. As some certifications expire, please ensure all staff remain compliant with the following requirements: <https://srs.ubc.ca/training-and-general-education-courses/mandatory-training-for-all-ubc-workers/#What%20training%20is%20required%20for%20job%20specific%20tasks?>

### **Task Specific Training Requirements - UBC**

Each role in the workplace has assigned tasks that require training specific to that worksite. COVID-19 considerations may need to be addressed where tasks need to be changed and or modified. Supervisors are responsible for task assignment and assessment of the training needed to complete those tasks safely and effectively.

While this job-specific training may be delivered by the supervisor or a trainer with demonstrated subject matter expertise, the supervisor retains responsibility for oversight of training and confirmation that an adequate level of proficiency has been attained. Signing off on an employee’s training completion testifies to demonstration of trainee competency and is a legally necessary demonstration of supervisory due diligence.

Particularly during COVID-19, if a supervisor finds that an employee has not reached an adequate level of competency, further training must be done prior to sign off of the training record for that assessed requirement. A [Task Specific Training Documentation Template \(WORD\)](#) is available to guide you in the documentation of staff training assessments and completion.

### **Mandatory Training and Task Specific Training - VCH**

VCH staff receive mandatory training during their orientation and through the on-line learning hub. Additional courses are also available through this link: <http://learninghub.phsa.ca/Learner/Home>

### **Additional SOP’s and Training**

#### **UBC Safe Work Procedure - General Cleaning & Disinfection of Surfaces**

[https://riskmanagement.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2020/04/SRS-OHS-SWP-001-General-Surface-Cleaning\\_final.pdf](https://riskmanagement.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2020/04/SRS-OHS-SWP-001-General-Surface-Cleaning_final.pdf)

#### **UBC employee COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

[https://riskmanagement.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2020/04/COVID-19-PPE-Guidance\\_final.pdf](https://riskmanagement.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2020/04/COVID-19-PPE-Guidance_final.pdf)

#### **Ordering Critical Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), COVID-19 Research Resumption (May 2020)**

<https://srs.ubc.ca/covid-19/health-safety-covid-19/working-safely/personal-protective-equipment/>

#### **UBC Employee COVID-19 Physical Distancing Guidance**

<https://riskmanagement.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2020/04/COVID-19-Physical-Distancing-Guidance-FINAL-.pdf>

#### **Non-Medical Masks and the Risks Associated With Them**

<https://srs.ubc.ca/2020/05/13/non-medical-masks-and-the-risks-associated-with-them/>

**VCH Infection Prevention and Control (These are the guidelines which all must follow for clinical research.)**

<http://ipac.vch.ca/>

#### **Cleaning and Disinfection**

<http://ipac.vch.ca/cleaning-disinfection>

#### **How to don (put on) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – video**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJsKmcblkiA&feature=youtu.be>

#### **How to doff (take off) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – video**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ooZqZdehBCg&feature=youtu.be>

### **Monitoring and Update COVID-19 Safety Plans**

#### **VCHRI**

The COVID-19 Pandemic is unprecedented and, therefore, the implementation of the VCHRI Safety Plan may require updates to the plan, existing policies and/or processes depending on the changes and progress of the virus.

The VCHRI Executive Director is involved with Resumption Planning for current and future stages within the Faculty of Medicine and the VPRI. VCHRI key Directors and Managers hold weekly Operations meetings to review and discuss business process, policies, procedures and concerns related to the Resumption of Research. The Executive Director, Associate Director and Director, Clinical Trials Administration also sit on various Faculty of Medicine/UBC Steering/Coordinating and Health Authority Committees and are involved with high level process decisions and/or approvals.

The VCHRI Council is inclusive of Centre Directors, VCH Executive Staff and other key personnel. Research Resumption plans will be discussed through these regular and ad-hoc meetings (where necessary).

Relevant information/updates/process changes received from the above will be updated where appropriate in the Safety Plans and/or communicated and distributed via e-mail to Centre Directors (or Department Heads), for dissemination to Principal Investigators and Staff.

#### **VCHRI contacts for questions or information:**

- Manager, Facilities and Administration – Karen Donaldson – 604-675-2561 or [Karen.donaldson@vch.ca](mailto:Karen.donaldson@vch.ca)
- Director, Clinical Trials Administration – Stephania Manusha – 604-675-2567 or [stephania.manusha@vch.ca](mailto:stephania.manusha@vch.ca)
- Senior Communications Manager – Vivian Sum – 604-875-4111 ext. 22782 or [vivian.sum@vch.ca](mailto:vivian.sum@vch.ca)

#### **Centre Directors (or Department Heads)**

It is the responsibility of Centre Directors to ensure:

- Establish a safety plan and ensure all research staff returning to work are properly trained in all safety procedures and/or will be appropriately supervised
- all Principal Investigators (or supervisors) have been informed on appropriate Workplace Health measures
- ensure supports for staff mental and physical health be made available as they return to campus.

- Implement routine screening/questions of staff for COVID-19 symptoms checking for individuals exhibiting symptoms (such as cold, flu, or COVID-19 including coughing or sneezing) and ensure they do not come into the workplace.
- Establish research, personnel and maintenance schedules for the lab to ensure adherence to the safety rules and maximum occupancy rules
- Ensure all personnel under their supervision have read and understood all policies pertaining to their research site and are adhering to all Federal/Provincial regulations and UBC policies.
- Monitor and address issues related to Centre Safety Plans on an on-going basis and should include a daily walkthrough of the facility to determine if safety measures are being complied with and maintained. (This should include monitoring for occupancy limits and ensuring occupancy signage is posted, physical distancing requirements are being adhered to, sign-in sheets are in use where applicable, cleaning and sanitation protocols are being observed, etc.) The above may involve delegation of some responsibility to Principal Investigators, or other staff, however, Centre Directors retain overall responsibility.

The process for Non-Compliance is outlined in the UBC Policy for Non-Compliance Policy which can be found at Appendix B.

### **VCHRI Supervisors/Manager responsibilities**

- Establish, implement, monitor and address appropriate safety measures in compliance with federal and provincial regulations and UBC/VCH policies and guidelines. (Note that under the [University Safety Policy \(PDF\)](#), supervisors have the responsibility to formulate specific safety rules and safe work procedures for their area of supervision. They are also responsible for ensuring that all employees under their supervision are aware of safety practices and follow the safety procedures.)
- Establish, implement, monitor and maintain a schedule for personnel required to be on-site and are compliant with occupancy limits and physical distancing requirements.
- Ensure all personnel under their supervision have read and understood all policies pertaining to the site and adhere to all the Federal/Provincial regulations and UBC/VCH policies and guidelines.

### **Employee Responsibilities**

- Before coming to work, all personnel must check their health status. Personnel experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, sneezing, shortness of breath, loss of sense of smell/taste, sore throat, tiredness, fever) must not come to work.
- Individuals displaying symptoms of COVID-19 (described above) must remain at home and isolated until they have been confirmed COVID-free by testing or have been symptom free for the length of time recommended by the BCCDC. Personnel who have been in contact with a person confirmed or presumed to have COVID-19 must also self-isolate as per provincial health guidelines. Personnel will be referred to the BC Health Self-Assessment tool to determine if they require testing and/or medical care: <https://bc.thrive.health/>.
- All work that can be done off campus must continue. Data processing, writing manuscripts, writing grant proposals, creating presentations, studying, ordering of lab supplies, online library research, computations, etc. should be done from home. Exceptions may be considered for cases where research personnel do not have the possibility to work from home.
- On campus research during Stage 1 will be restricted to experienced research personnel. Training of new research protocols is strictly limited to situations where physically distancing can be maintained. This assessment will be up to PIs.
- In-person group meetings, events or lectures cannot be organized in Stage 1.
- Where exemptions have been given for a faculty member to access his or her office, they must

- not have guests in the office during Stage 1
- Read, understand and signoff that they consent to following the Safety Plan and all the Federal/Provincial regulations and UBC/VCH and VCHRI policies and guidelines pertaining to performing research during COVID
- Report concerns regarding COVID-19 concerns to faculty supervisors, as appropriate in the context of UBC/VCH and BC privacy regulations.

### **Ramp down activities if required**

Due to the frequent and unknown changes related to the virus there may be a requirement to reverse the research resumption. Centres (or Departments) must be ready to address ramp down of activities and revert to remote access. VCHRI would provide notification through e-mail and on the VCHRI website if/when required.

### **Assess and Address Risks From Resuming Operations**

New staff should **not** be on-site during Stage 1 Resumption of Research. Where existing staff may require training for new tasks and/or responsibilities Supervisors must provide staff members with a training plan/SOP/Work Procedure and or training manuals.

Where new equipment has been installed Supervisors must provide or arrange for training on the operation and use of said equipment while observing appropriate physical distancing and safety measures. Staff may also require a scheduled training session(s) with an external vendor representative (i.e. a cage/tunnel washer).

Upon completion of training, it must be recorded and saved on the staff/employee training record.

Due to the recent research curtailment Centre Directors (or Department Heads) or their designate should perform a walkthrough of all space to address operational requirements needed to safely resume research. These may include but not be limited to:

- Radiation and biohazard certificates are still valid
- Annual equipment certifications are still valid such as biosafety hoods, fume hoods, etc.
- Determine where equipment servicing or calibrations may be required
- Oxygen, gas and vacuum should be monitored to ensure they are functioning appropriately. Where concerns are identified, an e-mail should be sent to VCHRI at [research@vch.ca](mailto:research@vch.ca) where a work order will be submitted to VCH Facilities Maintenance and Operations.
- Ensure adequate supplies are available (supplies may not be readily available and may delay your re-start)
- Where Personal Protective Equipment is deemed necessary; appropriate supplies are available. Due to high demand, stock is low and may not be readily available.
- Check eye wash stations and let water run prior to use
- Ensure occupancy limits and physical distancing markers are clearly posted/defined where applicable.

### **Acknowledgement**

#### **COVID-19 Safety Plan Acknowledgement and Implementation**

All personnel resuming research within VCHRI must agree in writing to abide by an appropriate COVID-19 Safety Plan.



VCHRI has developed an overall Return to Work Safety Plan which will be circulated to all VCHRI personnel via all e-mail distribution lists and posted on our website at <https://www.vchri.ca/covid-19-information-and-faqs> and on the VCHRI Health and Safety Bulletin Boards.

**The above-mentioned VCH Research Institute Return to Work Safety Plan is effective immediately and must be adhered in addition to individual Centre/Department safety plans by all personnel accessing research space within VCHRI.**

Dr. W. Robert McMaster  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature:  \_\_\_\_\_

Title: Executive Director, VCHRI

And

Dr. David Granville  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature:  \_\_\_\_\_

Title: Associate Director, VCHRI

Final approved by Public Health: July 16<sup>th</sup> 2020  
Final approved by UBC FOM: July 29<sup>th</sup> 2020  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This plan will be reviewed every two weeks, updated (where necessary) and communicated/distributed via e-mail to all VCHRI Centres and staff and posted on our website.

Where VCHRI Centres/Departments choose to follow the Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute Return to Work Safety Plan instead of creating their own, all staff must be provided with a copy of said plan, review and acknowledge their understanding (sign a copy) and receive a counter-signed copy (from their supervisor) prior to returning to the workplace. A copy of the final document must be retained on file.

For Faculty/PI's acceptance of the plan you may wish to implement the following document  
[VCHRI PI Access Agreement Template](#)

Last updated: July 29, 2020 (FINAL)

# Appendix A: UBC Faculty of Medicine and Health Authorities Research Resumption: Guiding Principles and Prioritization

Developed according to the guidelines provided by VPRI and VCHRI

## UBC FOM and Health Authority Research Guiding Principles

The following principles will be used to guide decision making and processes by the Faculty of Medicine and Health Authority Research Institutes related to staged-in resumption of on-site activities:

- The health and well-being of faculty, health professionals, trainees, staff, patients and the public is paramount.
- The orders, notices and guidance of the Provincial Health Officer, Health Authorities and WorkSafeBC will be followed.
- Approval for on-site activities (including research, education and administration) will only be granted to those who require on-site resources and cannot conduct this work remotely.
- **All activities that can continue remote work must do so.**
- There will be a staged and coordinated approach across each building and site (includes university, health authority and clinical research spaces).
- Staged resumption of activity may need to be reversed and stricter curtailment conditions imposed in response to public health guidance or changes to the situation at any particular site.
- Equity and personal circumstances will be considered in evaluating how to plan and conduct resumption of on-site activities.

## Prioritization guidelines of on-site activities:

- COVID-19 research
- Current research activity exemptions as approved previously (no new research or additional related activities).
- Clinical trials concurrent with clinical care
- Graduate students who need to be on-site to complete lab work for graduation as determined by the student's Supervisory Committee for completion of thesis.
- Positions required to run core research facilities that are essential for approved on-site research.
- Upcoming time sensitive activities that cannot be done remotely and require on-site research access.
- Equity considerations for those that cannot work from home for various circumstances.
- Non-time sensitive activities that cannot be done remotely for limited access.

## Contextual information

Given that most buildings occupied by the Faculty of Medicine and Health Authority Research Institutes are mixed used and/or shared buildings, there may be multiple approvals required before on-site activities can resume. For this initial Stage 1, common spaces, such as kitchen facilities, lounges and meeting spaces will remain closed, alternate eating areas will be arranged compliant with safety procedures and whenever possible outdoor areas should be considered. Research Centres and Principal Investigators who are approved to resume specific on-site activities will be required to develop a safety plan for approval, and complete and post an access agreement for each individual approved to be on-site. Rotational schedules among different laboratories and clinical areas may be required to accommodate

on-site requests. Reporting of non-compliance to the guidelines for Stage 1 research resumption will follow the processes outlined in the appended non-compliance information.

UBC and Health Authority building's maximum occupancy at any time for this stage will be limited and safety distancing must be adhered to. For research buildings at our Health Authority sites, they will also likely have limited operating hours that those sites will need to comply.

For UBC Point Grey campus, UBC Building Operations has indicated that Point Grey campus buildings will have limited operating hours (either option 1 of **7am-6pm** OR option 2 in two shifts from **7am-12pm and 3:30pm-8pm**, on Mondays to Fridays. Any PI/lab wanting to work on a shift basis will need to make a request through their Building administrator. It may not be possible to accommodate all requests. It is recognized that a small number of researchers have scientifically justified research protocols that require sampling/observations/data collection over an extended period of time and beyond regular working hours. For special procedures for extended work hours, please note the protocol for work between 8:00 pm – 7:00 am or on weekends and stat holidays will be as follows:

1. The PI must notify their department head / director and building administrator that there will be work continuing beyond the regular hours.
2. Building administrators will notify security ahead of time which lab(s) will have people working extended hours (time, date, location and who).
3. The researchers will post a notice on the lab door that late-night or weekend work is underway, indicating name(s), working hours.
4. The researchers in the lab must abide by their department or unit's working-alone policy (i.e., two-person working principle) with a safety plan to ensure that there are regular checks on researchers.
5. PIs are responsible for ensuring that their research staff are trained in appropriate cleaning protocols for their lab/research space, including cleaning high contact surfaces, benches, shared equipment, fume hood sash handles, doorknobs and other common areas within their labs on weekends.
6. Researchers must respect the custodial servicing of labs and spaces during regular working hours and be mindful of custodial staff working in other areas of the building while researchers are in their labs afterhours.

## Process and Responsibilities for developing and implementing research resumption plans

### UBC Point Grey Campus

1. **Faculty members/PIs** completes the re-entry request form and detailed spreadsheet and submits to either:
  - Centre/Institute Director with a cc to the Department Head/School Director, or
  - Department Head/School Director if no Centre/Institute is involved.

**NOTE:** The excel spreadsheet is for your (each Unit's) use for your information if helpful. It is supposed to help serve to document the requests of the Unit (Centre or Dept or Institute). The FOM does want a summary spreadsheet from each unit and thus thought this lower level spreadsheet is useful to gather information.

2. **Centre/Institute Director OR Department Heads ("unit")** reviews their unit's requests to approve or decline each PI request.
  - With all approved requests from the Unit, the Centre/Institute Director/Dept Head submits a unit-level resumption plan to the Faculty via the Executive Associate Dean, Research for further approval at the entire Faculty level to ensure all building activities and users are appropriately coordinated.

- For the Unit level resumption plan, we will need a Unit level summary spreadsheet on the research activities in your unit.
  - FOM wants to see is the overall Centre/Institute/Department plan and we do not need/want to see the individual PI plans
  - If your unit has started a plan as a bundle and does not need individual Faculty member/PI requests, we are very supportive of a Centre/Unit level bundle.
  - The unit-level activity resumption plan will need to include the overall safety plan.
3. **Faculty of Medicine** reviews requests from the Centre/Institute Directors and Department Heads/School Directors, and coordinates the requests to produce *Faculty-Level Research Resumption Plan(s)*.
  4. **Vice-President Research and Innovation** reviews Faculty-Level Research Resumption Plan(s) to provide feedback/approve plan(s).
  5. Once approved by VPRI or the Health Authority, the EADR will notify the Department Head, Centre/Institute Director for further dissemination back to the PIs.

## Hospital Site Campuses

1. **Faculty members/Pis** completes the re-entry request form and detailed spreadsheet (if needed) and submits to either:
  - Centre/Institute Director with a cc to the Department Head/School Director, or
  - Department Head/School Director if no Centre/Institute is involved.

**NOTE:** The excel spreadsheet is for your (each Unit's) use for your information if helpful. It is supposed to help serve to document the requests of the Unit (Centre or Dept or Institute). The FOM does want a summary spreadsheet from each unit and thus thought this lower level spreadsheet is useful to gather information.
2. **Centre/Institute Director OR Department Heads ("unit")** reviews their unit's requests to approve or decline each PI request.
  - With all approved requests from the Unit, the Centre/Institute Director/Dept Head submits a unit-level resumption plan to the Associate Dean Research for their site.
    - For the Unit level resumption plan, we expect that the ADRs will need a Unit level summary spreadsheet on the research activities in your unit
  - The ADR at each hospital will likely also want to see the overall Centre/Institute/Department plan and does not need/want to see the individual PI plans
  - The unit-level activity resumption plan will need to include the overall safety plan  
Information that is useful for Unit Leads related to the building safety planning
  - Sites include:
    - **PHSA** - BCCRI, BCCHRI, WHRC, BCCDC, Mental Health, etc.
    - **VCHRI** - VGH, CBH (clinical space – floors 1 and 2), ICORD, Eye Care Centre, Robert Ho/JBRC, Skin Care Centre, DHCC, etc.
    - **PHCRI** – St Paul's, BCCSU, etc
3. **Associate Dean Research** at each Hospital Site review requests and produces a Site-Level Research Resumption Plan and submits it to the Faculty of Medicine via the Executive Associate Dean, Research for further approval at the entire Faculty level to ensure all building activities (Education, Research and Admin) are appropriately coordinated.
4. **Faculty of Medicine** reviews requests from the Associate Dean Research from each Hospital Site, and coordinates the requests to produce *Hospital Site Faculty-Level Research Resumption Plan(s)*.

5. **Health Authority** reviews *Hospital Site* Faculty-Level Research Resumption Plan(s) to provide feedback/approve plan(s).
6. Once approved by the Health Authority, the relevant ADR, Hospital Site, will notify the Department Head, Centre/Institute Director for further dissemination back to the PIs.

**If Faculty/Staff/Students have questions concerning their resumption to on-site work:**

UBC Occupational and Preventive Health  
Faculty of Medicine Health and Safety – Paul Gill  
UBC HR Advisors –  
0628

604-827-4713  
604-827-1982  
Ekjot Dhatt 604-822-8649 or Pui Lam 604-822-

## Appendix B: Procedure for Reporting Non-Compliance

The resumption of research activity at UBC will be managed in Stages, which have been developed and articulated in close collaboration with faculty members, Deans, the UBC Executive, and others. To resume research activity successfully will require a commitment from the community to the principles and plans that the University has established:

- The health and well-being of faculty, students and staff is paramount
- The orders, notices and guidance of the Provincial Health Officer will be followed
- Permission to conduct on-campus research and scholarship will be limited to those who require on-site resources and cannot work remotely
- There will be a phased and coordinated approach across each campus
- Phased resumption of activity may need to be reversed and stricter curtailment conditions imposed in response to public health guidance or changes to the situation on our campuses
- If an employee has a concern about returning to work, they will have an opportunity to discuss that with their supervisor, Human Resources, and their employee group as appropriate
- Equity will be considered in evaluating how to plan and conduct research resumption

Faculty- and PI-level plans for resuming research activity will reflect these principles, and will account for relevant safety protocols. There will be common protocols around handwashing and physical distancing, building-specific protocols for cleaning, and unique protocols for individual labs and other spaces. It is of paramount importance that all community members involved in on-campus research activities comply with these safety protocols at all times. It is equally important to understand that failure to comply with these protocols may result in access permissions being withdrawn, may present a risk to the health and wellbeing of our people, and could ultimately lead to discipline.

Individual PIs are responsible for the health and safety of personnel working in their labs. Academic Heads of Unit are responsible for the health and safety of everyone who reports to them, and also responsible for ensuring that everyone in the Unit is adequately supervised. The supervisor – the PI or the Administrative Head of Unit – is responsible for investigating any complaints of non-compliance with a specific safety protocol, non-compliance with the guiding principles above or non-compliance with guidance from the Provincial Health Officer. For support in investigating incidents of non-compliance or similar concerns, Administrative Heads of Unit or the Principal Investigator can contact their Human Resources Advisor or Faculty Relations Senior Manager.

Circumstances may occur where there is a perception of non-compliance, when in fact that is not the case. An example would be two work colleagues who live in the same home who are seen to be working less than six-feet apart from one another. In most cases, a quick discussion with the individuals involved may help to resolve any concern.

Where non-compliance with safety protocols is clearly occurring, however, it is important to understand the expected reporting procedure.

1. Non-compliance with a safety protocol within a lab/research space is first reported to the Principal Investigator. Non-compliance on the part of a PI is first reported to the Administrative Head of Unit.
2. The Principal Investigator (or Head of Unit) must investigate the situation without delay by contacting the appropriate people in the lab or other space. This could be research staff, trainees, or the PI. They may also seek advice from UBC Safety & Risk Services.
3. As part of the investigation, it may be advisable, though not always feasible, to do visual inspection of the lab/research space in question.
4. If a claim about non-compliance is substantiated, the supervisor (PI or Head of Unit) will consult with Human Resources, Faculty Relations, Safety & Risk Services, and other units to determine an appropriate response. The response could include:

- Suspension of access to on-campus facilities;
  - Curtailment of the type or location of activity that can be undertaken on campus;
  - Depending on the nature and severity of the non-compliance, suspension or other employment-related discipline.
5. Resumption of activity can only occur with the agreement of the supervisor who investigated the complaint, and only when that person is satisfied that the conditions leading to the non-compliance have been resolved.

Supervisors are expected to share this document with their teams, to ensure everyone involved in resuming research activity is aware of the importance of respecting the safety protocols put in place, of the mechanism for investigating complaints of non-compliance, and of the potential consequences for non-compliance.



## **Appendix C: VCHRI Buildings and Research Sites**

The VCH Research Institute is located within Vancouver Coastal Health. The large majority of research is conducted by UBC Faculty and or VCH staff (such as physicians, nurses, physiotherapists, etc) within Vancouver General Hospital, UBC Hospital and G.F Strong. However, the geographic footprint for VCH is very large and includes many community hospitals and health centres located on the North Shore, Richmond, Sea-to-Sky Highway, Sunshine Coast, Bella Bella, Bella Coola and the Central Coast. VCHRI consists of 10 Research Centres (BC Centre on Substance Use – BCCSU), Centre for Cardiovascular Innovation, Centre for Clinical Epidemiology and Evaluation (C2E2), Centre for Heart and Lung Health, Centre for Hip Health and mobility (CHHM), Djavad Mowafaghian Centre for Brain Health (DMCBH), Immunity and Infection Research Centre (IIRC), International Collaboration on Repair Discoveries (ICORD), Ovarian Cancer Research (OVCARE), Vancouver Prostate Centre (VPC), 6 Programs (Community Based Translational Research, Emergency Medicine Research , Hematology Research Program, Richmond Community of Care, Rehabilitation Research Program, Vancouver Community of Care), 5 research areas BC Professional Fire Fighters’ Burn and Wound Healing Research Laboratory, Diabetes and Islet Cell Transplantation, Macular Research, Pancreas BC, Skin Sciences and many individual researchers scattered throughout.

The following are the locations where the majority of research takes place:

### **VCH buildings with Research Only (no VCH clinical services)**

- Jack Bell Research Centre (JBRC)
- Robert H. N. Ho Research Centre (RHNH)
- VGH Research Pavilion (RP)

### **VCH Buildings with research and clinical services co-located/integrated:**

- Blusson Spinal Cord Centre (BSCC)
- Djavid Mowafaghian Centre for Brain Health (DMCBH)
- Detwiller Pavilion, UBC Hospital
- Eye Care Centre (ECC)
- G. F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre
- Gordon and Leslie Diamond Health Care Centre (GLDHCC)
- Koerner Pavilion, UBC Hospital
- Jim Pattison Pavilions (North and South)
- Leon Blackmore Pavilion (previously Centennial Pavilion)
- Lion’s Gate Hospital and the HOPE Centre
- Purdy Pavilion, UBC Hospital
- Richmond Hospital
- Skin Care Centre (SCC)
- Various Community Clinics within Vancouver Coastal Health

## Appendix D – Resumption of Non-Clinical Research – Stage 1



To: All VCHRI Investigators

June 2, 2020

### Resumption of Research –Stage 1

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 situation, VCH Research Institute (VCHRI) will commence a gradual, phased resumption of research at VCH by following the guidelines set out by the BC Public Health Officer and the principles, prioritization and contextual information set out by UBC. The approach, however, will also be aligned with VCHRI and VCH requirements.

**All activities that can be performed remotely must continue to do so. Those who cannot work remotely must comply with the following:**

#### **Occupancy**

In accordance with the above we are planning a gradual re-entry plan with a maximum building occupancy limit of 30% capacity for each research building. We recognize this will be difficult to achieve as very few groups occupy an entire building and most have other functions such as VCH clinics included within. A recent VCH town hall meeting indicated that VCH is aiming for an initial 10% increase for face-to-face patient visits to ambulatory buildings (such as DHCC), which is significantly lower than our plan, but operates differently than wet/dry lab areas. Staff should continue working remotely; where this is not possible a plan must be submitted.

Considerations for Occupancy: A physical distance of at least 2 metres must be maintained at all times during any activities. There are many ways to calculate the maximum number of people for a given space in order to meet this objective:

- For example - a general guideline is 12 m<sup>2</sup> /person and number of available lab benches/work stations. While a space's footprint/square footage may determine the maximum number of people, areas that have a lot of equipment, benches, machinery or obstructions may accommodate fewer people in order to adhere to physical distancing requirements.

Overall building occupancy will be determined using combined information provided on the excel spreadsheet(s) that will include prioritization and justification of activities, and take into account the use and scheduling of shared facilities, medical animal facilities, availability of PPE, shipping and receiving requirements, etc. Centre Directors will review the plans and spreadsheets to make a determination as to which projects can proceed. (See Approval Process for details.)

Clinical spaces must follow VCH policies and guidelines for space occupancy, policies and safety measures. Details are currently being investigated (see "Human Subject Research") so current resumption plans will be reviewed for research only and will address those located in

JBRC, Robert H. N. Ho Research Centre, Research Pavilion, ICORD (floors 3, 4 and 5 and vivarium), the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Eye Care Centre and the Centre for Brain Health, floors 3, 4 and 5.

Buildings such as Gordon and Leslie Diamond Health Care Centre, Skin Care Centre, all but the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Eye Care Centre will be reviewed separately in accordance with clinical/health authority policies and processes are still being determined.

### **Engineering and Administrative Controls**

VCH Infection Control does not approve of the installation of plexiglass. Tarps are not also approved and we cannot enter into space modifications for these initial phases. With the above constraints, and where remote work is not possible, physical distancing concerns should be addressed using staff scheduling, marking areas with tape or signage to delineate physical distancing, adjusting furniture placement (such as a file cabinet in front of your desk area to increase your barrier) or relocating staff or services to an alternate area.

Washrooms are limited to one person at a time even those with two stalls.

Staff must stay on the right side at all times when using hallways and stairwells.

Elevator occupancy is being changed to accommodate physical distancing. Signage will be posted.

You may wish to implement floor monitors to ensure occupancy and safety measures are being followed.

Meetings should be conducted remotely and meetings rooms only used for single-use confidential calls or where 2 metre physical distancing can be maintained.

Lunch – staff are encouraged to go outside where possible. Some limited areas will be provided for food consumption to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Areas will be noted with appropriate signage.

### **Cleaning and Sanitation**

Housekeeping is extremely important. Your work area should be kept clean, organized, and clear for easy disinfection.

Crothall is the external vendor responsible for cleaning and sanitation within VCH and their workers must be provided access each weekday. This is particularly important to ensure high-touch areas as well as regular cleaning can be addressed and left clean for the morning shift staff. Here are the schedules provided to us - you must work around these times to allow housekeeping to perform their work:

- Eye Care Centre: 4pm to 11 pm
- Jack Bell Research Centre: 5:30 pm to 11:30 pm
- Research Pavilion: 5:30 pm to 9 pm
- Robert Ho Research Centre: 5:30 pm to 11:30 pm

Working on weekends is not recommended in a VCHRI building, however, if you have essential work that must be carried out it is recommended you outline your request/justify the need, confirm adherence to safety measures, include a work alone policy (where applicable) and a cleaning and sanitation plan.

### Human Subject Research

The clinical research process is complicated and requires coordination with many groups including the PHC, CREB, BREB, VCH for operational services, etc to develop a process and identify policies that will ensure compliance with COVID-19 requirements.

Due to this we will be separating clinical research resumption plans from all other research – details regarding the new process and policies will be forthcoming in the next week. In the meantime, researchers can continue to submit the following types of research requests *using the existing research exemption process*:

- COVID-19 research
- Current research activity exemptions as approved previously (no new research or additional related activities)
- Clinical trials concurrent with care.

Non-clinical research will follow the process as outlined in this document.

### Animal-based research

All animal-based research work conducted at JBRC, ARU or ICORD requires a separate "VCHRI animal research resumption access request" form to be completed and submitted to [research@vch.ca](mailto:research@vch.ca). All applications will be forwarded for review to the relevant Medical Animal Facility Manager. A copy of the form can be found on our website at <https://www.vchri.ca/covid-19-information-and-faqs>.

Medical Animal Facility Managers will discuss with the Academic Director and VCHRI where appropriate. They will approve or decline requests taking into account UBC's prioritization guidelines, staff and resource availability, occupancy limits, cleaning and sanitation protocols, etc. Note: Facility staff must be able to perform their duties alongside approved research projects while adhering to safety measures.

This process should be completed first in order for Centre Directors to determine prioritization of overall centre projects.

### Documents Required for Researchers

- Animal-based research must be submitted using a "VCHRI animal research resumption access request form"
- Each group/project must include a safety plan for all on-site research regardless of which building you are located in, which must be read and acknowledged by the Principal Investigator and all members requiring access to the space. WorkSafe BC has a [safety plan template](#) which can be used to develop your own. Special emphasis must be included to address cleaning and sanitation and PPE availability. Principal Investigators and Centre Directors are responsible for monitoring and ensuring safety measures are being adhered to. Personnel violating the plan or regulations will have their access revoked.

- The VCHRI Access Priority Template is a modified version of the UBC template which has an additional tab labelled "project information" – your Centre Director will need this information from you to incorporate into the overall "Unit level research access summary spreadsheet"
- All VCHRI forms can be found on our website at <https://www.vchri.ca/covid-19-information-and-faqs>.
- NOTE: All projects using animals or biohazards must have approval from the appropriate UBC committee.

#### **Documents Required for Centre Directors**

- A summary unit plan is required and must define the process that will be implemented to manage overall occupancy
  - The plan is expected to include on-going requests that were processed via the research exemption process
- Overall safety plan for your unit which amalgamates researcher plans and takes occupancy limits into account
- The "VCHRI Unit Level Research Access Summary Spreadsheet" is a modified version of the UBC template which has an additional tab labelled "project information". (This tab is a duplicate of the one to be completed by researchers titled "VCHRI Access Priority Template" with the intention that it can be copied by Centres to provide required data onto the "VCHRI Unit Level Research Access Summary Spreadsheet". This form can be found on our website at <https://www.vchri.ca/covid-19-information-and-faqs>.

#### **Approval Process**

1. Researchers must submit research resumption requests to their Centre Director. (Those who do not belong to a Centre must submit to the Academic Department Head. For example, the majority of the Research Pavilion groups do not belong to a centre and will submit to their Academic Department Head.)
2. The Centre Director will send an overall Centre submission as outlined in the "Documents required for Centre Directors" to VCHRI at [research@vch.ca](mailto:research@vch.ca) for review and approval.
3. VCHRI will review each plan submitted by the Centre Directors for non-clinical research taking UBC prioritization, safety plans, medical animal facility approvals, and building occupancy into account.
4. VCHRI will then discuss with the health authority where appropriate and once a decision is made, VCHRI will issue a notification letter to the Centre Director, who will then notify individual researchers. Note: Education and Administration are not approved via VCHRI.

**To ensure the safety of our community, you must not return to the workplace prior to receiving notification that your request has been approved.**

Upon receiving research resumption approval, safety plans must be posted where clearly visible. It is strongly recommended simple signage be implemented to identify occupancy limits for each space. People are more apt to follow a sign that tells them how many people can be in the lab or on the floor at any given time than by remembering a schedule.

Compliance monitoring will be the responsibility of the researcher(s) and the Centre Directors.



## Process for Stage II

VCHRI will review the process for Stage I and make adjustments as needed to address the process for Stage II. Upon notification from Public Health Officials that we may begin the next phase and in coordination with UBC, a VCHRI notification will be sent to all Centre Directors.

## Resources

Volunteers for research studies – you may wish to connect with REACH BC <https://www.reachbc.ca/> to help recruit Canadians who would like to participate in research studies.

These measures are in place to ensure the health and safety of all research personnel. Physical distancing and laboratory safety must be maintained at all times.

We fully understand that the initial curtailment has significantly impacted your research programs and research personnel. Our goal is to manage this next phase competently to allow for increased occupancy as quickly as possible without jeopardizing the health and safety of our personnel.

We thank you for your continuing cooperation.



Dr. W. Robert McMaster  
Vice-President, Research, VCH  
Executive Director, VCHRI  
Executive Associate Dean, Research,  
Faculty of Medicine, University of British Columbia



Dr. David Granville  
Associate Director, VCHRI

## Appendix E – Resumption of Clinical Research – Stage 1



To: VCH Research Community

June 11, 2020

### **Re: Resumption of Human Subject Research**

We know you have been anxiously awaiting communication from VCHRI regarding the resumption of human subject research at VCH and we acknowledge that over the last few days, you may have received conflicting messaging regarding next steps. As noted in our Memo dated June 2<sup>nd</sup>, the process for resuming human subject research is complex and requires significant coordination with operations teams at VCH, in addition to departments responsible for research oversight at UBC. A thoughtful and measured approach is needed in determining the scope of Stage 1 research resumption for human subject research at VCH.

In accordance with VCHRI's previous communication, a phased-in approach to resumption of on-site human subject research activity is being planned at VCH. This is needed to slowly and responsibly restore clinical services and other patient and public spaces across VCH's facilities and communities and is aligned with the VCH/PHC COVID-19 Recovery Planning Framework. This will enable VCH/PHC's ability to maintain acute care capacity for COVID-19 cases, while simultaneously preventing undue harm to non-COVID cases. Prioritization and restoration of healthcare services are being determined by VCH/PHC and VCHRI's phased-in resumption plan.

### **PRIORITIES**

During Stage 1, the following human subject research will be prioritized:

1. COVID-19 research<sup>1</sup>
2. Current research activity exemptions, as previously approved by VCHRI
3. Ongoing<sup>2</sup> clinical trials concurrent with clinical care (including new enrollment)

The resumption of human subject research activities at VCH is dependent on:

- (i) alignment of research study requirements with VCH/PHC's COVID-19 recovery plan;
- (ii) the type and extent of clinical or diagnostic services required;
- (iii) the ability of a clinical department/area to support a research study; and
- (iv) an approved safety plan.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is now a requirement of VCHRI that COVID-19 related clinical research (e.g., clinical trials, registries, biobanks) be submitted to the COVID-19 Clinical Research Coordination Initiative (CRCI) for review. VCH operational research approval may be withheld until confirmation of CRCI review is provided to VCHRI. Additional details regarding the CRCI initiative may be found here: <https://www.med.ubc.ca/research/covid-19-clinical-research-coordination-initiative/>

<sup>2</sup> The focus during Stage 1 will be on the resumption of clinical trials, prior to the curtailment, had both UBC REB approval and VCH operational research approval in place. This includes clinical trials that were either ready to enroll the first patient, or had already enrolled the first patient and enrollment was continuing. By clinical trial we mean any investigation involving participants that evaluates the effects of one or more health-related interventions on health outcomes.

<sup>3</sup> Where research program/unit is integrated with a VCH clinical area, the safety plan developed by VCH will apply and must be adhered to. Where there is no integration with a VCH clinical area, the research program/unit will need to develop its own safety plan.



## **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

When a research program/unit is ready to consider resumption of onsite human subject research at VCH, the head of the research program/unit<sup>4</sup> will need to collect and collate investigator-level information (including previously exempted research), populate the VCHRI-required documentation, and submit the required documentation to VCHRI for review. The documentation that must be submitted to VCHRI is as follows:

1. The "*VCHRI Unit Level Research Access Summary for Human Subject Research*" spreadsheet, which defines the processes that will be implemented to manage overall occupancy; and
2. A copy of the VCH clinical safety plan (as applicable). Where research space is not managed by VCH, a copy of the research program/unit's safety plan, which amalgamates investigator-level plans and takes occupancy limits into account, must be provided to VCHRI.<sup>5</sup> WorkSafe BC has a [safety plan template](#), which may be used to guide the development of a research program/unit safety plan.

All forms may be found on the [VCHRI website](#).

## **REVIEW PROCESS**

1. Investigators must submit research resumption requests for onsite human subject research to their research program/unit heads.
2. The research program/unit head will send the unit level submission to VCHRI at [research@vch.ca](mailto:research@vch.ca) for review and approval. Researchers belonging to the UBC Department of Medicine should cc: [dom.research@ubc.ca](mailto:dom.research@ubc.ca) on their submission to VCHRI.

Submissions for Stage 1 resumption of human subject research will be reviewed on a regular basis and should be provided to VCHRI no later than **FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 2020**.

3. VCHRI will review the submission taking into consideration the criteria for Stage 1 prioritization of human subject research, safety plans and building occupancy. VCHRI will engage the applicable VCH operational leads, as well as additional VCH stakeholders (e.g., VCH facilities personnel) for input and guidance. If the research program/unit has already engaged with VCH operational leads, please provide the name and contact information of such operational leads on Tab 1 of the *VCHRI Unit Level Research Access Summary for Human Subject Research* spreadsheet. The guiding principles developed by UBC and Health Authority Guidelines (included below for reference) will guide decision-making and processes related to the resumption of onsite human subject research activities. It is important to note that:
  - a. Due to the complexity of these reviews, including the need for VCHRI to consult with various VCH operations and department level personnel, VCHRI cannot guarantee a timeframe within which these reviews may be conducted. We will, however, do our best to facilitate timely reviews;

<sup>4</sup> VCHRI is requesting that research resumption requests be coordinated within research programs/units to expedite the review process. We are strongly discouraging individual submissions (i.e. at the investigator-level). We are flexible in how these submissions are organized (e.g., may be submitted by the Research Centre Head, Clinical Trials Unit Medical Lead, Research Program Head, as appropriate).

<sup>5</sup> Each research program/unit must include a safety plan for all on-site research, which must be read and acknowledged/signed by all researchers and research staff requiring access to the space. Special emphasis must be included to address cleaning and sanitation and PPE availability. Research program/unit heads together with Principal investigators are responsible for monitoring and ensuring compliance with safety measures. Personnel violating the plan or regulations will have their access to the site revoked.

- b. VCH space that is utilized by research and managed by VCH requires approval from VCH operations for increased research activity;
  - c. Research program/unit level plans that do not align with the VCH/PHC COVID-19 recovery plan, priorities for clinical research and occupancy guidelines, may be required to make adjustments to their plans and re-submit to VCHRI for approval.
4. Once all appropriate levels of VCH review have been obtained, VCHRI will issue a notification letter to the research program/unit level head, who will then notify individual researchers. The notification letter will list the human subject research projects that have been approved for resumption in Stage 1, which are then authorized to proceed.
  5. Changes to unit-level information (i.e. new projects) must be added to the "*VCHRI Unit Level Research Access Summary for Human Subject Research*" spreadsheet and submitted by the research program/head to VCHRI for review.

#### *UBC and Health Authority Guiding Principles*

- The health and well-being of faculty, health professionals, trainees, staff, patients and the public is paramount.
- The orders, notices and guidance of the Provincial Health Officer, Health Authorities and WorkSafeBC will be followed.
- Approval for on-site activities (including research, education and administration) will only be granted to those who require on-site resources and cannot conduct this work remotely.
- **All activities that can continue remote work must do so.**
- There will be a staged and coordinated approach across each building and site (includes university, health authority and clinical research spaces).
- Staged resumption of activity may need to be reversed and stricter curtailment conditions imposed in response to public health guidance or changes to the situation at any particular site.
- Equity and personal circumstances will be considered in evaluating how to plan and conduct resumption of on-site activities.

#### **SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS**

1. VCH has developed COVID-19 *recovery resources* that are specific to the acute, administrative, ambulatory, community and long-term care settings: <http://ipac.vch.ca/Pages/Emerging-Issues.aspx>. Under the *recovery resources* tab, researchers will find key principles for safety, recovery checklists and scripts for each of the above-noted health care settings. The following factors are addressed for each of the health care settings:
  - a. virtual and in-person visits;
  - b. family, visitors, and support;
  - c. considerations for staff providing direct patient care and for those who are not;
  - d. environment (e.g., physical distancing, lay out and flow), cleaning and disinfection, and supplies (e.g., PPE recommendations).

VCHRI strongly encourages research program/unit heads to review the resources provided by VCH to ensure that the elements noted above have been adequately addressed in their safety plans.

2. VCH has developed resources for educating staff on appropriate use of PPE. Refer to the section on *personal protective equipment and hand hygiene* on the following website: <http://ipac.vch.ca/Pages/Emerging-Issues.aspx>.
3. Research must not introduce additional risk of COVID-19 transmission to staff, patients or families who are working in, or receiving services at VCH/PHC.
4. All activities that can be performed remotely must continue to do so. If a researcher or research team member must come to work, they need to assess their own health using the [daily self-screening assessment tool](#) or other applicable screening checklist. If a researcher or research team member is experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms, they should inform their supervisor and not come to work.
5. Researchers and research staff must maintain a distance of two meters between persons at all times, must comply with the maximum occupancy of each office or open workstation, and disinfect shared workspaces, as per their approved research program/unit safety plan.
6. Researchers, research team members and research participants must follow the [VCH Essential Visitor](#) guidelines while on site. Sponsor/industry representatives are not currently considered "essential visitors" and are not permitted on site during Stage 1 of human subject research resumption without VCH operational approval.
7. As part of the safety plan, research participants must be pre-screened for COVID-19 exposure and symptoms, [as per VCH guidelines](#), prior to attending VCH facilities for procedures or tests. Alternatively, where possible, amendments to the original study application should be made to conduct remote/virtual visits.

These measures are in place to ensure the health and safety of all research personnel.

We fully understand that the research curtailment has significantly impacted your research programs and research personnel. Our goal is to manage this next phase competently to allow for increased occupancy in the very near future.

We thank you for your continuing cooperation.



Dr. W. Robert McMaster  
Vice-President, Research, VCH  
Executive Director, VCHRI  
Executive Associate Dean, Research,  
Faculty of Medicine, University of British Columbia



Dr. David Granville  
Associate Director, VCHRI

## Appendix F- VCHRI Animal Research Resumption Access Request

### VCHRI Animal Research Resumption Access Request

Send completed form to [research@vch.ca](mailto:research@vch.ca)  
Use Adobe Reader to complete this form

As we plan for the resumption of on-campus animal research, PIs are required to apply for access to VCHRI Medical Animal Facilities (MAF). To be granted access during this limited, prioritized **Phase One** research resumption, justification for the resumption, and coordination with Centres (or Departments when not part of a Centre) is required. Please send the completed form to [research@vch.ca](mailto:research@vch.ca). We will respond to the email address provided for the principal investigator in the form below. Please note, if you are requesting access to more than one VCHRI animal research facility, please submit a separate form for each facility.

The following criteria will be considered in decisions for prioritized access:

- The nature of the project:
  - Exempted studies
  - Pre-experimental preparation required, e.g. breeding, recovery from cryopreservation, special diet feeding
  - Studies where only animal facility staff access needed, e.g. breeding, aging studies
  - Studies for graduate and/or post-doctoral fellow program completion (i.e. within one year)
  - Lower risk studies, e.g. acute non-surgical, well-established acute surgical, simple short-term (<4 weeks) studies
- An appropriate safety plan

These questions will help inform and prioritize the animal research resumption planning process. When animal research resumes, PIs must strictly adhere to their proposed plan, including any guidelines established by facility managers and building requirements. Failure to do so may result in loss of access privileges.

#### Laboratory information

Name of Principal Investigator:	
Centre:	
Department:	
Email:	
Primary phone number:	

#### Facility request access to: Submit separate forms for access to each facility

<input type="checkbox"/> Animal Resource Unit (ARU)	<input type="checkbox"/> JBRC	<input type="checkbox"/> ICORD
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Have you received approval from your Centre to resume research (if access to areas outside of the animal facility is required)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Pending	Other (please explain):
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#### Approved ACC protocol number(s)

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**Rationale for resuming on-campus animal research during Phase One:** Consider VCHRI guidelines and explain why your on-campus animal work should be prioritized when phase one resumption of on-campus animal research begins. Consider the criteria considered in the decision for access in phase one and indicate which item(s) apply for your work.

The access request relates to:

☐ Exempted studies

☐ Pre-experimental preparation required e.g. breeding, recovery from cryopreservation, special diet feeding

☐ Studies where only facility staff access needed e.g. breeding, aging studies, including maintenance of precious strains as well as experimentation











☐ Studies for graduate and/or post-doctoral fellow program completion

☐ Lower risk studies e.g. acute non-surgical, well-established acute surgical, simple short term studies

☐ Others: \_\_\_\_\_

Provide rationale for above items:

**Research personnel:** Include all names of researchers requesting facility access.

#	First name	Last name	Email	Personnel	Anticipated graduation / program completion year	Room(s) you require access to
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						



**Access details:** Provide details on the specific rooms for which your researchers are requesting access. Include frequency, duration and time of arrival of access for each room (research access is restricted to 9am to 3pm weekdays). **Please contact Facility Management 48 hours (minimum) prior to arrival** except in unusual circumstances, such as attending to a sick animal. If your personnel require animal user training (online or hands-on), facility user orientation, or any additional training to operate equipment or access spaces, please indicate below.

#	Name	Frequency & Duration of Access / Training Needs
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

**Work performed:** Will you or your researcher(s) be coming in-person to conduct your research or will MAF technician staff be performing the work? For all individuals listed above, please explain why their in-person presence is considered a priority and list what resources they will need such as space, CO<sub>2</sub>, anesthesia, scales, clean cages, etc. Describe the research activities your researcher(s) will be performing in the facility and what you require MAF technician staff to perform - including the expected duration and frequency, such as serum draws - how many, how frequent? Note: Research access is 9am to 3pm weekdays.

#	Name	Research activity required
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

**Safety:** Outline the safety plan for your project, including how physical distancing requirements will be maintained. Describe the route for animals.

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**PPE:** Do you require PPE not otherwise supplied by MAF? If yes, what are your plans for obtaining PPE for the lab?

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<div>OPTIONAL</div>
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Signature of PI

Date

Or click box to add scanned signature:



**Decision Notes:**

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**VCHRI Medical Animal Facilities Approval**

<div>OPTIONAL</div>
---------------------

Or click box to add scanned signature:

Date