

**Illinois State University**  
**Recommendations for Return to On-Campus and Field Research**

*You are encouraged to consider these recommendations when drafting your return to research plan. Not all of these recommendations will be applicable to your particular situation, so be sure to create a customized plan for your research activity/site. Note that each PI may complete a plan that covers the staff and students working in their facility and/or working on their project.*

**PIs are responsible for developing and implementing appropriate management plans for their laboratories and for training their personnel on appropriate cleaning and disinfecting, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette.**

**Key Resources**

- [Illinois State University Coronavirus](#)
- [McLean County Health Department](#)
- [Restore Illinois Plan](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Guidance](#) and [Description of Symptoms](#)
- [United States Governments' Coronavirus Website](#)
- [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\) COVID-19 Resources](#)

*The following is a list of items to consider when reopening your research work on campus or in the field. This list is not exhaustive, and not all items will apply to all situations. Feel free to add, remove, or modify items, but ensure that all items meet University, Local, State, and Federal recommendations. Be aware that these recommendations are subject to change with little notice.*

**Initial Startup Operations**

Prior to occupation of your research facility/site

- Educate your students and staff about new the restrictions and your expectations that all safety guidelines are followed
- Consider work schedules that allow for social distancing (see below). Close/block any workstations where social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Ensure all safety equipment (hoods, eyewash, etc.) are in working order or have current inspections
- Verify with your department/school that you are able to order and receive the items needed for your work
- Check with vendors to be sure that your reagents, supplies, equipment are available. Supply chains for many research items have been stressed during the pandemic.
- Verify that required instrumentation is in working order
- Dispose of unstable, peroxide forming, or materials that may have degraded since the lab was closed

**Health and Safety Considerations**

Social distancing is critical when returning to work. Consult University Guidelines related to social distancing. Researchers are expected to avoid close contacts whenever possible and observe the latest

guidance regarding face coverings. Your Chair/Director should have a copy of the latest version of the Redbird Return plan.

The following recommendations include University guidance that will be in place starting June 1, 2020:

Labs/Offices

- Face coverings must be worn when social distancing (6 ft) cannot be maintained.
- In private offices, face coverings are not required when the occupant is alone. Visitors must maintain 6-ft social distance, or visitors and the employee must wear a face covering.
- In cubicles with 5 to 8-foot walls, face coverings are not required when the employee is the sole occupant.
- In cubicles with <5-foot walls, a 6-foot social distance must be maintained, otherwise a face covering must be worn.
- At lab benches, if 6-foot social distancing can be maintained at all times, face coverings need not be worn. In situations where frequent movements near other occupants are required, face coverings must be worn.
- Shared equipment (keyboard, mouse, pipettes, glassware, instruments, etc.) should be disinfected between uses, unless the equipment operators already wear gloves as part of their normal lab operations.
- In some situations, physical barriers may be erected. Consult with Environmental Health and Safety (<https://ehs.illinoisstate.edu/>) regarding the appropriateness of such barriers.
- If it is not possible to maintain social distancing requirements, consider scheduling shift work (e.g. mornings/afternoons, Mon-Wed-Fri/Tue-Thu-Sat)
- Disinfect all work areas at the beginning and end of each shift.
- Where necessary, revise your Chemical Hygiene Plan to reflect the “new normal”

Field Work (all forms of off-site work, including visiting archives, libraries, etc.)

- Check local/state regulations at your field site, and (if applicable) call to be sure you may conduct your activity under any current restrictions.
- If you plan to use University vehicles or if you plan to be reimbursed for travel to the field site (“University Sponsored Travel”) should complete the necessary pre-check/notification forms available on the risk management site: <https://riskmanagement.illinoisstate.edu/>. In-state travel does not currently require travel registration, but all applicable travel practices, protocols, and guidelines also apply to all University Sponsored Travel within the State of Illinois.
- If travel to the site involves more than a single researcher, *appropriate precautions must be taken. Multiple passengers (including the driver) not of the same household must maintain a minimum of 6 feet physical distance and wear face coverings for the duration of travel. Passengers (including the driver) who cannot maintain a minimum of 6 feet physical distance at all times, even while wearing a face covering, may not occupy the same vehicle.*
- Maintain social distancing at the field site. If the research requires working in close approximation to another person, wear face coverings.
- Take hand sanitizers and disinfectants with you, and use them frequently.

### Shared spaces (e.g. break rooms, lounges, conference rooms, kitchens)

- Face coverings are required for employees, students, and visitors in all common areas.

### Animal Care (IACUC) Considerations

The IACUC and the Animal Care Facilities are operating as normal, and are expected to continue operating without disruption, even under Phase 1 of Restore Illinois.

- Consult Research Ethics and Compliance at [REC@ilstu.edu](mailto:REC@ilstu.edu) if you have any questions about resuming work with animals.
- Do not order any new animals until supply chain and on-campus ability to receive and deliver the animals is verified
- Have all required equipment, supplies, PPE in place before ordering/commencing work
- Maintain social distancing as outlined in previously in this document.
- Be thoughtful when planning experiments. It is possible that a resurgence of the virus will require restrictions similar to those of the spring semester. Have a plan for how this would affect your animal usage.
- Consider modifying IACUC protocols to reflect how you would change work under the different phases of Restore Illinois.

### Human Subjects Research (HSR) and IRB Considerations

The IRB is operating as normal, and is expected to continue operating without disruption, even under Phase 1 of Restore Illinois.

- Consult Research Ethics and Compliance at [IRB@ilstu.edu](mailto:IRB@ilstu.edu) if you have questions about resuming HSR.
- When conducting HSR off-site, consult the field work recommendations above.
- Do not start HSR involving person-to-person contact until it is safe to do so. In some cases, studies may be done if all participants wear face coverings. Studies involving contact should be able to resume in Phase 5 of Restore Illinois.
- Maintain social distancing as much as possible, and use remote/online methods for collecting data whenever possible.
- Modify/write IRB protocols to reflect the manner in which subjects will be recruited and participate. ***Exempt protocol modifications are not required when data collection changes between online and face-to-face, but expedited and full board protocols must be modified prior to collecting data using the new manner in which subjects will be recruited and will participate.*** Note that research interactions with human subjects via Zoom is considered as secure.
- Expect field sites (e.g. schools) to have more stringent visitor restrictions than in the past.
- To minimize disruptions to the work, IRB protocols should be written with plans for study changes between different Restore Illinois phases, or with using generalized language for the manner in which interactions will occur.

## **Other General Guidelines for After Operations Resume**

- Be aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>)
- Emphasize to your team that they must stay home if they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 or any other illness.
- Educate your team about which populations are at higher risk for COVID-19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html>). Inform them that if they are a member of any of these populations that they should contact HR (<https://hr.illinoisstate.edu/contact/>).
- Have plans in case you or a member of your team must self-quarantine.
- Wash your hands frequently using soap and water, scrubbing hands for 20 seconds.
- When soap is not available, use an approved hand sanitizer and rub all surfaces of your hands until dry.
- If at all possible, researchers (i.e. students, technicians, postdocs) are expected to work remotely on all aspects of their work that do not have to be conducted on site (e.g. literature searches, data analysis, report writing, experiment planning).
- If you work with sensitive living specimens, delicate equipment, expensive musical instruments, etc. that require special cleaning procedures:
  - Contact EHS (<https://ehs.illinoisstate.edu/>) to be sure that your areas and items are not affected by the enhanced cleaning protocols that will be in place upon returning to work.
  - Develop a plan about how your areas can be safely be disinfected by you (or your team) to prevent spread of the virus.
- Be sure to use EPA-approved disinfectants, for the recommended period of time (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>).
- Do not share equipment (hand tools, pipettes, spray bottles, markers, etc.) w/o wiping down with an approved disinfectant.
- Post work schedules on door so that the Building Service Workers know when you and/or members of your team will be working.
- Always be aware that a resurgence of the virus may require work to be scaled back or halted. Have a plan for disrupted operations.
- Wear safety glasses at all times, and consider wearing them even in areas where not required. Not only will they provide protection from splashes, they will also help keep you from touching your eyes.
- Post a sign on your door labeled “Social Distancing Room Occupancy” and the occupancy limit that allows for social distancing.
- Do not allow visitors into your work areas.
- Be aware that your building may be operating at reduced staffing levels, and that allows more opportunities for theft. Lock doors wherever possible, and keep valuables out of public spaces.
- When possible, hold meetings (group and individual) remotely (Zoom, Teams, etc.).