

NOTE: All ongoing research must meet the qualifications as outlined in the Vice Chancellor for Research Pramod Khargonekar communication from May 11, 2020: <https://news.research.uci.edu/research-continuity/>

Physical Distancing Recommendation for Staff

Maintain at least six feet between you and your colleagues. This is the **minimum** distance recommended by the California Department of Public Health. This can be tricky, and EH&S has some suggestions to address common areas of concern. If you have questions or concerns, email EHS at safety@uci.edu.

Item	Recommendations
Benchtop work in open lab areas	Assign laboratory workers to alternating bench stations, have them work in different parts of the laboratory, and generally try to keep them physically separated.
Work conducted in in small rooms (≥6 feet between workers impossible)	EH&S recommends restricting lab rooms and research spaces where workers cannot consistently maintain at least six feet of separation to only one person at a time.
Work in neighboring biosafety cabinets	Laboratory workers should not work in neighboring biosafety cabinets, stagger seating at biosafety cabinets to maintain at least six feet between workers.
Non-hazardous research tasks	Wherever possible, move non-hazardous and non- research tasks into offices and other available non-lab areas. This may include labeling empty sample tubes, unpacking equipment, data analysis, and other tasks.
Maintaining critical operations	Consider assigning personnel to teams or rotating shifts so that if illness occurs in one group, it is less likely to spread to other lab workers and impact lab operations.

Lab Practices

Many standard lab practices double as effective infection control measures:

- Make sure that staff continues to wear the same PPE they use in normal circumstances.
- Routine handwashing, especially after doffing gloves prevents staff from spreading contamination from experiments onto clean surfaces. This also works well in limiting the spread of common illnesses.
- Maintain standard disinfection protocols and consider expanding them to surfaces in labs that staff frequently contact.

Special Considerations

For situations where emergency services or training must be performed, but lab staff cannot be at least 6 feet apart, EHS recommends taking the following steps to provide adequate control methods during these situations:

1. Hold remote sessions on the computer when the option is viable
2. Break groups into sub-groups in order to keep group size as small as possible
3. Schedule frequent breaks
4. Sanitize the space before use [EH&S Cleaning Guidance](#)
5. All participants should wear face coverings at all times
6. Sanitize the space during breaks, and after use