

Policy on Investigator Use of CMS Animal Facilities During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Version June 9, 2021

Background

COVID-19 is a pandemic illness in people, first documented in 2019 and caused by a novel SARS-CoV2 virus. During the pandemic, Tufts Comparative Medicine Services (CMS) continues to provide daily animal husbandry, veterinary care, and essential operations and services. In addition to Tufts CMS staff, researchers need to access the animals in the facility for colony maintenance, required animal health procedures or actions, and research.

Tufts CMS requires certain practices and procedures to be followed by research staff entering the centralized animal facilities on the Boston Health Science Center campus or Medford/Somerville campus. The aim of the policy and required actions is to reduce or prevent the spread of disease to anyone working in the animal facilities while beginning to ease restrictions in alignment with Tufts University and Tufts Medical Center responses to COVID-19 and following the guidance of the CDC, OSHA, and federal, state, and local government.

Policy Statement

Investigative staff **MUST** follow the procedures listed below when entering and using the CMS centralized animal facilities.

Daily Health Status Survey

You **must** be cleared to return to campus on a daily basis, including passing the **Daily Health Status Survey** (based on your institution).

Participation in COVID-19 testing program

Investigative staff using the CMS animal facilities must participate in a Tufts University COVID testing program.

Physical Distancing

Individuals are **no longer required to remain six or more feet apart (no distancing requirement)**. Use good judgement about distancing and density of people in a room and take into consideration that there may be a mix of vaccinated and nonvaccinated people in the animal facilities.

Masks

Disposable surgical masks **MUST** be worn at all times within the animal facilities. Cloth masks may **not** be worn in the animal facilities. Take masks only as needed for use in the facility (not for home use or to share with others).

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Disposable lab coats/gowns/dedicated scrubs and gloves **MUST** be worn at all times within the animal holding rooms. Use disposal lab coats/gowns and gloves provided by CMS. Disposal lab coats/gowns and gloves should be discarded upon leaving the animal holding rooms.

Room Occupancy

There are no limits on the size of indoor gatherings. Standard pre-COVID room occupancy limits will apply to CMS animal facilities (corridors, animal housing rooms, procedure rooms, etc). Tufts CMS recommends for convenience and planning purposes that investigative staff continue use of the SuperSaas room scheduler for reserving time in CMS procedure rooms. Questions about SuperSaas scheduling should be directed to TuftsCMS-RoomScheduler@elist.tufts.edu. While there is no longer a limitation on the number of people in a procedure room, please use good judgement about distancing and density of staff in a room.

Clean and Disinfect High Touch Surfaces

Investigative staff should clean and disinfect benches, door handles, and other surfaces touched. CMS staff also will continue to disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

General COVID-19 guidance and policy

Follow updated guidance and policy on COVID-19 from Tufts University <https://coronavirus.tufts.edu/> (questions to covid19@tufts.edu), Tufts Medical Center (Tufts MC Intranet EVA pages, questions to Tufts MC Research Administration), and federal, state, and local guidelines.

Returning to Tufts Campuses

For Tufts University and External Clients, you must also complete the one time Returning to Tufts Campuses Training Module (more information found here: <https://coronavirus.tufts.edu/return-to-campus/employees>)

Leave work if you begin to feel ill during your workday

Notify your supervisor and leave the facility as soon as you begin to feel any symptoms of illness. (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>)

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore Throat
- New loss of taste or smell

Practice good hygiene procedure

Do not touch your face, mouth, nose, or eyes. Wash hands frequently and always after using the bathroom or before eating. Wash hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds. If soap and running water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub that contains at least 70% alcohol. Cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow, not your hands. Dispose of any used tissues immediately in the trash and wash your hands following use.

Regulations and Reference Documents

“COVID-19 and Tufts University” <http://coronavirus.tufts.edu/>

“COVID-19 Information and Research Resources.” <https://viceprovost.tufts.edu/covid-19-information-research-resources>

“Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19.” U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

“Control and Prevention.” <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/controlprevention.html>

“Prevent Worker Exposure to Coronavirus (COVID-19)”

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3989.pdf>

“Coronavirus (COVID-19)” <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

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Authorizing Signature:

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