FACE MASKS AND PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT
GUIDANCE FOR TUFTS LABORATORY PERSONNEL

The guidance below provides instruction to Tufts University laboratory personnel on how to implement COVID-19 infection control measures while also complying with laboratory safety requirements. The use, disinfection, storage, and disposal of facemasks and other personal protective equipment (PPE) is described.

GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR WORKING IN A LABORATORY

- For the purpose of COVID-19 infection control, it is expected that University-supplied facemasks will be worn in all research laboratories and spaces. Information on care and use of facemasks can be found in the forthcoming institutional guidance (link to be provided).
- Facemasks are not a substitution for social distancing.
- Masks should be worn at all times except when eating. In that case, follow instructions below for removing and storing your mask for reuse.
- Note: Some laboratory supervisors require the wearing of fire-resistant (FR) laboratory coats and garments. Fire-resistant (FR) facemasks are available and should be worn if FR laboratory coats are required. Contact Environmental Health and Safety for sources of these types of facemasks.

WORKING IN A BIOLOGICAL SAFETY LEVEL 2 LAB WITH ENHANCED PRECAUTIONS

- Wear a University-supplied facemask while in other spaces where lab work is performed. When entering a lab with BSL2 enhanced precautions, remove the University-supplied facemask and store it for reuse as described below.
- A new, dedicated facemask will be worn, in addition to other required PPE, as described in your lab’s IBC registration and/or the Biosafety Guidelines for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Research.

WORKING IN A LABORATORY ANIMAL FACILITY (CMS OR LAMS)

- Wear a University-supplied mask to the vivarium.
- Wear required laboratory animal facility attire and following normal donning and doffing procedures for the spaces you are entering.
- Note: Facemasks worn into ABSL2 areas must be discarded upon exiting as part of normal doffing procedures. In that case, a new disposable facemask must be donned after exiting the ABSL-2 area.

REMOVING AND STORING MASKS FOR REUSE

- University-supplied facemasks should only be temporarily removed when eating or when donning masks or respirators as dedicated lab-specific PPE.
- Any time a mask is removed, it must be stored in a storage bag. (See storage below)
- Do not place masks on counters, computers, etc.
- Perform hand hygiene (wash hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer) before and after handling the mask so that you don’t contaminate your mask or your face. (Click here to watch CDC handwashing video).
- Avoid touching the outer surface of the mask while handling the mask. Try to handle it by touching the ear loops or straps.
### STORING FLAT MASKS

- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth when removing the face covering or disposable mask.
- Carefully fold so that the outer surface of the mask is held inward during storage.
- The folded mask can be stored between uses in a clean breathable paper bag. Do not use plastic bags or coated paper bags, since these will retain moisture and prolong survival of virus on the mask.
- Close the bag by folding over the top of the bag and secure the fold with tape or a staple. Label the paper bag with your name.
- Perform hand hygiene (wash hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer) after handling the mask.

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<tr>
<th>How to Fold</th>
<th>How to place in bag</th>
<th>Supplemental Guidance</th>
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| ![Folded Flat Mask](Image) | ![Flat Mask in Bag](Image) | - Fold the mask so that the outer surface is folded inward on itself
- Remove mask from bag by holding ear loops |

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| ![Folded Flat Mask](Image) | ![Flat Mask in Bag](Image) | - Fold the mask so that the outer surface is folded inward on itself
- DO NOT reuse if any of the ties are ripped or broken
- Remove mask from bag by holding ties |

Photo from Children's Hospital of Philadelphia PPE Conservation document

### CUP SHAPED MASKS WITH STRAPS

- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth when removing the face covering/disposable mask.
- Carefully remove the mask so that you do not touch the outside.
- Loop your finger into the strap and pull the strap away from the ear or untie the straps.
- Close the bag by folding over the top of the bag and secure the fold with tape or a staple. Label the paper bag with your name.
- Perform hand hygiene (wash hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer) after handling the mask.

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| ![Folded Flat Mask](Image) | ![Flat Mask in Bag](Image) | - Ensure the outer surface of the mask is facing downward in the paper bag
- Remove mask from bag by holding elastic strap |

Photo from Children's Hospital of Philadelphia PPE Conservation document
CLEANING, DISINFECTION AND DISPOSAL OF FACEMASKS, PPE AND LABORATORY EQUIPMENT

DISPOSAL OF FACEMASKS

To dispose of a University-supplied facemask, discard it into the regular trash. It is not necessary to discard into a biohazard waste container.

Note: Disposable facemasks used as laboratory PPE must be handled in accordance with your laboratory-specific procedures or IBC registration. Contaminated PPE should not be discarded into the regular trash. The used facemasks would be discarded into the biohazard waste container, in the same manner as other disposable PPE such as gloves.

DISINFECTION OF EQUIPMENT

You must choose an EPA-approved disinfectant. SARS-CoV-2 virus can be inactivated with a variety of Quaternary Ammonium Compound (QAC)-based disinfectants or alcohol-based disinfectants very effectively without the irritation and corrosive effects of bleach solutions.

For a full list of EPA-approved disinfectants with activity against SARS-CoV-2 and their contact times, refer to List N on the EPA website.

Below are some examples of common disinfectants:

- Clorox disinfecting wipes
- Lysol brand disinfectant multipurpose cleaner wipes
- Lysol disinfectant spray
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Clorox commercial solutions hydrogen peroxide disinfectant
- Alcohols such as 70% ethanol or isopropanol
- Bleach/sodium hypochlorite

REUSABLE PPE

Reusable PPE such as safety glasses, goggles, and face shields should be disinfected before and after use. If visibly soiled, clean with a mild detergent prior to disinfecting.

Reusable PPE should be disinfected with an EPA-approved disinfectant. Liquid disinfectant should not be sprayed directly onto PPE. This could cause resuspension of the viruses from the PPE. Instead, spray a paper towel or cloth and then wet wipe the surfaces to be disinfected. Allow disinfectant adequate contact time with surfaces to inactivate the virus.

If possible, avoid sharing reusable PPE by purchasing additional equipment and assigning to each individual user. If sharing is necessary, PPE must be disinfected between uses.

Reusable PPE assigned to an individual user should be marked with the user’s name and stored in a secure area that reduces the likelihood it is used by another.

LABORATORY EQUIPMENT AND SURFACES
Remember to disinfect laboratory equipment and surfaces using an EPA-approved disinfectant. Surfaces include, but are not limited to:

- Workstations
- Benches
- Biological safety cabinets
- Electronics
- Computer workstations
- Door or equipment handles