CONTINUITY GUIDANCE FOR RESEARCH FACILITIES

Based on a scenario with widespread COVID-19 communal transmission Principal Investigators and Facility Managers should operate on the following assumptions:

- A percentage of your workforce may be out sick or unable to come to work.
- Essential research infrastructure, such as power and telecommunications, will be maintained.
- LARC and Laboratory Safety Division will maintain critical functions.
- Orders and deliveries of critical supplies, including basic PPE, may be delayed.
- Core facilities may be unavailable.
- Facilities services and repairs may be delayed.
- Decontamination of your facility may be required in the event of confirmed local illness.

STEPS THAT CAN BE TAKEN TO ENSURE CRITICAL RESEARCH CONTINUITY

1. Identify essential procedures and processes that require regular personnel attention and plan for a reduced workforce (e.g. cell culture maintenance). If necessary scale back on large scale processes.

2. Prioritize critical laboratory activities.

3. Identify experiments that can be ramped down or delayed.


5. Determine what recovery procedures, and recovery timelines, would be in the event that cultures or other samples were lost during a closure.

6. Coordinate with colleagues who have similar research activities to identify ways to cover critical activities.

7. Pre-order critical supplies that may be affected by shipping delays.

8. Communicate significant planned absences and/or lab closures to your Department and Laboratory Safety.

MINIMIZING SPREAD OF ILLNESS AMONG RESEARCH STAFF

1. Increase handwashing frequency using soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
2. Regularly disinfect common laboratory areas with 70% ethanol. Common touch points that should be cleaned daily include: door handles, sinks, fridge and freezer doors, fume hood and biosafety cabinet sashes, telephones, computer keyboards.

3. Remind staff to stay home if they feel unwell.

4. Consider alternating work schedules to minimize the close contact with others.

5. Use remote work technologies for meetings.

6. Avoid performing high risk procedures alone, suspend these procedures until normal work flow resume. If staff have to work alone make sure that they notify a colleague or UTSAPD.

7. Ensure all high risk materials (radioactive, biohazards, chemicals) are secured.

8. Check spill kits and ensure they are well stocked and easily available.

9. Update emergency contact lists and post them clearly.