



# COVID-19 General Checklist for Life Sciences Employers

May 7, 2020

This checklist is intended to help life sciences employers implement their plan to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace and is supplemental to the [Guidance for Life Sciences Employers](#). This checklist is a summary and contains shorthand for some parts of the guidance; familiarize yourself with the guidance before using this checklist.

## Worksites that Handle Infectious Pathogens

Research facilities, laboratories, and other locations that handle material that may contain pathogens and whose operations may disperse pathogens in the air must establish, implement, and maintain an effective written Biosafety Plan, administered by the facility's biological safety officer. The Biosafety Plan must include the following:

- List of job classifications with exposure to infectious pathogens.
- List of infectious pathogens known or reasonably expected to be present in laboratory materials and applicable biosafety measures.
- Procedures to ensure all incoming materials containing pathogens are treated as virulent, until verified as deactivated or attenuated.
- A risk assessment, performed by the biological safety officer, in accordance with [CDC's Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories guidelines](#).
- Feasible engineering controls including containment equipment and procedures.
- Required safe work practice controls and prohibited unsafe work practices in accordance with the risk assessment and CDC guidelines.
- Necessary personal protective equipment (PPE), including respiratory protective equipment.
- Effective decontamination and disinfection procedures for laboratory surfaces, equipment, and tools.
- Procedures for communicating hazards to employees and providing required employee training.
- Emergency procedures for uncontrolled releases in the facility and untreated releases outside the facility.
- Provision of applicable vaccines to employees.
- Procedures to investigate and provide medical follow up to employees exposed to laboratory pathogens.
- Procedures to annually inspect facilities and annually audit the facility's biosafety procedures.

- Procedures to record and correct deficiencies found during inspections and audits.



## Contents of Written Worksite Specific Plan

All facilities, whether they handle pathogens or not, must institute a written worksite specific plan to reduce COVID-19 transmission.

- The person(s) responsible for implementing the plan.
- A risk assessment and the measures that will be taken to prevent spread of the virus.
- Training and communication with employees and employee representatives on the plan.
- A process to check for compliance and to document and correct deficiencies.
- A process to investigate COVID-cases, alert the local health department, identify and isolate close workplace contacts of infected employees until they are tested.
- Update the plan as necessary to prevent further cases.



## Topics for Employee Training

- If applicable, training on the facility's biosafety plan and all controls used to prevent transmission of aerosol transmitted diseases while working with pathogens.
- Information on [COVID-19](#), preventing spread, and who is especially vulnerable.
- Self-screening at home, including temperature and/or symptom checks using [CDC guidelines](#).
- The importance of not coming to work if employees have a frequent cough, fever, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, recent loss of taste or smell, or if they or someone they live with have been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- When to seek medical attention.
- The importance of hand washing.
- The importance of physical distancing, both at work and off work time.
- Proper use of cloth face covers.



## Individual Control Measures & Screening

- Symptom screenings and/or temperature checks.
- Encourage workers who are sick or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 to stay home.
- Encourage frequent handwashing and use of hand sanitizer.
- Provide disposable gloves to workers who are screening others for symptoms, who touch items frequently handled by customers, or when cleaners and disinfectants.
- Strongly recommend cloth face covers.
- Close or increase distance between tables/chairs in breakrooms or provide break areas in open space to ensure physical distancing.



## Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols

- If applicable, update the Biosafety Plan with enhanced cleaning and disinfecting protocols
- Clean and sanitize all equipment and tools in contact with materials that may contain pathogens after each use.
- Perform thorough cleaning in high traffic areas.
- Frequently disinfect commonly used surfaces.
- Clean and sanitize shared equipment between each use.
- Clean touchable surfaces between shifts or between users, whichever is more frequent.
- Ensure that sanitary facilities stay operational and stocked at all times.
- Make hand sanitizer and other sanitary equipment readily available to employees.
- Use products approved for use against COVID-19 on the [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)-approved](#) list and follow product instructions and Cal/OSHA requirements.
- Adjust or modify store hours to provide adequate time cleaning and stocking with physical distancing.
- Provide time for workers to implement cleaning practices before and after shifts, hire third-party cleaning companies.
- Install hands-free devices if possible, including motion sensor lights, contactless payment systems, automatic soap and paper towel dispensers, and timecard systems.
- Consider upgrades to improve air filtration and ventilation.
- For those facilities in laboratory, research, or clinical settings, evaluate existing cleaning and disinfecting protocols and determine additional measures or necessary adjustments to prevent exposure to COVID-19.



## Physical Distancing Guidelines

- Implement measures to physically separate all persons by at least six feet using measures such as physical partitions or visual cues (e.g., floor markings, colored tape, or signs to indicate to where workers and/or employees should stand).
- Minimize exposure between persons where physical distancing cannot be maintained, such as Plexiglas barriers.
- Use signage at all entrances and strategically throughout the facility to remind persons of physical distancing at every opportunity.
- Adjust in-person meetings, if they are necessary, to ensure physical distancing.
- Place additional limitations on the number of workers in enclosed areas to ensure at least six feet of separation.
- Stagger employee breaks, in compliance with wage and hour regulations, to maintain physical distancing protocols.

- Use the following hierarchy to prevent transmission of COVID-19 in research, production, and other work areas especially where physical distancing is difficult to maintain: engineering controls, administrative controls, and PPE.
  - Engineering controls include creating physical or spatial barriers between employees such as Plexiglas or other sturdy and impermeable partitions.
  - Administrative controls include increasing the number of shifts to reduce the number of personnel present at one time and ensure adequate physical distancing.
  - PPE includes face shields, some masks, and impermeable gloves for persons who have no contact with materials that may have pathogens. Note that some disposable equipment such as some face shields and respirators are prioritized for health care workers and workers that handle pathogens and should not otherwise be used.

