

# Safe work procedure during the COVID-19 pandemic

(updated April 1, 2022)

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## Department of Biological Sciences

### 1) COVID-19

- a. **The University of Manitoba requires faculty, staff, students and campus visitors to be fully (double) vaccinated against COVID-19.**
- b. Students/workers who have recently **travelled in Canada** must follow Current Public Health Orders for self-isolation (<https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/prs/orders/index.html#travel-self-isolation>). See the latest Information for Manitobans on “ Self-Isolation after Travel” for public health recommendations at <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/info-for-mbs.html>. Individuals who have recently **travelled internationally** must follow federal testing and self-isolation requirements (<https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid/travel-restrictions/isolation>).
- c. **Self-isolation and contact tracing:** students/workers should follow the U of M existing self-isolation protocols (<https://umanitoba.ca/covid-19/health-safety#testing-and-illness>). If you have been in contact with suspected/probable/confirmed cases of COVID-19 you must follow Current Public Health Orders <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/prs/orders/index.html#travel-self-isolation> and review the Information for Manitobans at <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/info-for-mbs.html>. Public health recommends self-monitoring for symptoms during 14 days for people who have been in contact with others who have symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19.
- d. If a student/worker has a family member/roommate who is self-isolating in the same accommodation, there are still some risks of contamination even if social distancing, masks and disinfectants are used. Such a situation should be reported to the supervisor and discussed case by case.
- e. Before coming to the University students/workers should review the COVID-19 Screening Questions ([https://www.gov.mb.ca/asset\\_library/en/coronavirus/covid19\\_screening\\_checklist.pdf](https://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/coronavirus/covid19_screening_checklist.pdf)) of the UM COVID site (<https://umanitoba.ca/coronavirus/latest-updates-and-safety#safety-measures-and-information> - Safety measures and information – Complete this questionnaire). This site provides flow charts for students/workers who have been advised to self-isolate/received COVID app alert.
- f. Review the list of symptoms that is posted at the following link <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/index.html> for COVID-19 symptoms.
- g. Stay home if you do not feel well or if you have ANY COVID-19 symptoms (even if they are mild):
  - i. Any cold or flu-like symptoms (cough, headache, muscle aches, sore throat/hoarse voice or runny nose)
  - ii. Fever or increased temperature/chills
  - iii. Loss of taste or smell
  - iv. Shortness of breath and/or breathing difficulties

- v. Vomiting or diarrhea for more than 24 h
  - vi. Fatigue
  - vii. Nausea or loss of appetite
  - viii. Conjunctivis (pink eye)
  - ix. Skin rash of unknown cause
- h. A worker experiencing any of the above symptoms should check this link (<https://manitoba.ca/covid19/testing/testing-eligibility.html>) for determining the eligibility for testing (PCR, RAT).  
The list of locations and hours of service are available at:  
<https://manitoba.ca/covid19/testing/index.html>  
The nearest testing site to University of Manitoba is 604 St. Mary's Rd. You can also go to the Dakota Medical Clinic, 17-845 Dakota Street (call 204 254 2087). Please check the link regularly.
- i. **To report a positive COVID-19 case on campus (identified by PCR or RAT):**
- i. If you have been on site, please **complete the following form** (<https://umanitoba.ca/coronavirus/case-reporting>) and contact your supervisor/instructor (cc the Head of the department).
  - ii. The information will be held in confidence in accordance with the Personal Health Information Act (PHIA).
  - iii. If you have not been on site, please contact your supervisor (cc the Head of the department).
  - iv. The infectious period is considered to be **2 days before the onset of symptoms/positive test and 10 days post onset/positive test**.
  - v. If you do not want to report a positive test result, **you must not come to campus for at least 10 days**.
  - vi. Review <https://umanitoba.ca/coronavirus/health-safety> (Testing and illness) for additional information.
- j. The University of Manitoba is recommending that its students, faculty and staff subscribe to the COVID-19 Alert App.
- k. The University of Manitoba has launched a COVID-19 case status page to report the current status of confirmed COVID-19 cases on campus (<https://umanitoba.ca/coronavirus/latest-updates-and-safety#cases-and-status-by-campus>)
- l. Check regularly the latest COVID-19 updates on campus at:  
<https://umanitoba.ca/coronavirus>  
<https://umanitoba.ca/coronavirus/staff-faculty-researchers#Latest-updates-and-information>  
<https://umanitoba.ca/coronavirus/staff-faculty-researchers#instructors-advisors-and-supervisors>  
<https://umanitoba.ca/coronavirus/latest-updates-and-safety#latest-covid-19-updates>
- m. For weekly reports on current activity of COVID-19 in MB check this link:  
<https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/surveillance/covid-19/index.html>
- n. Workers/students are expected to follow provincial health and safety guidelines when not at work. Do not come to work if you are unwell.

- o. Students/workers should follow the University “Enhanced Cleaning and Hygiene Measures” posted at <https://umanitoba.ca/covid-19/health-safety> (including frequent handwashing with soap, coughing or sneezing into elbow, not touching face, cleaning work surface frequently).
  - p. Students/workers who have concerns about returning to their workplace should talk to their supervisor.
- 2) Workers/students who have COVID-19 symptoms at work
- a. Should leave the workplace immediately to go home, wearing a mask.
  - b. Maintain the physical distance from others while leaving the building.
  - c. Use the Shared Health Screening Tool (<https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>).
  - d. Should check the link (<https://manitoba.ca/covid19/testing/testing-eligibility.html>) for testing eligibility.
  - e. Notify the supervisor and the Head of the Department as soon as possible.
  - f. Workers/students who may have been exposed to suspected/probable/confirmed cases of COVID-19 at the university should be rapidly informed and review the self-isolation recommendation (see section 1c) to prevent potential spread of the virus.
  - g. The student/worker lab(s) and office should be closed
  - h. The lab(s)/office should be sanitized following the institutional sanitization SOP (70% ethanol) (<https://www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.03.10.986711v1.full.pdf>).
  - i. Sanitizing time, location and protocol should be recorded.
- 3) Travel to the university
- a. Avoid using transit system, but if not possible, avoid rush hours (this travel can be discussed with the supervisor) and wear a mask.
  - b. Vehicle occupancy should be limited to members of the same household if possible.
  - c. If this is not possible, the following guidelines could be used to determine vehicle occupancy:
    - i. The number of passengers should be restricted as much as possible
    - ii. Maximum distancing is recommended
    - iii. Wearing 3-ply masks
    - iv. Maximizing ventilation
    - v. Carpooling should be limited, if possible, to a small group
- 4) Minimize the number of workers in a lab/office.
- a. Maintain physical distance (2 m) between workers/students in offices when masks are removed for drinking/eating
  - b. KN95 masks are mandatory indoors on UM campus even when physical distancing is possible. The only exception is when you are alone in an office or room with the door close. Check regularly [umanitoba.ca/coronavirus](https://umanitoba.ca/coronavirus) for updates.
  - c. Research groups will continue to work at 75% capacity until May 1.
  - d. Develop a protocol to disinfect surfaces and shared equipment (including computers). Review the need to wear gloves.
  - e. The hours spent in the lab should be limited based on the type of experiment run. Students/workers could work in shifts (morning/afternoon or start earlier/finish later or on alternate days). A schedule should be posted weekly.
  - f. The Faculty of Science does not recommend the use of plastic dividers in lab/office.
  - g. Work from home when possible
- 5) Building entrance and circulation in stairs/hallways (follow instructions posted in each buildings)
- a. KN95 masks are required when indoors at all times

- b. Dedicated doors for entrance or exit of the buildings (this will have to be reviewed for each building, some buildings may require more than one entrance door). If a building is using a single entry-point to gain access, signs will be posted directing the use of alternate doors only in case of emergency and form a line to keep social distancing while entering the building. Wheelchair users should still be able to access the building and circulate.
  - c. Narrow staircases should be used only to exit buildings
  - d. Some narrow hallways (Duff Roblin) could be used in one direction only if crossing the building. If moving only from the lab to a close office or the next lab, check that no one is already in the hallway before stepping out.
  - e. Avoid using tunnels if possible. Animals from the animal holding facility should be transported to Buller/BSB through the tunnel. In this case entrance doors from the tunnels should be accessible.
  - f. Accessibility buttons to open doors: sign to indicate to use elbow (if possible)
- 6) Elevators should be used only when necessary (person with disabilities or when carrying heavy load) and limit the number of occupants to one person wearing a mask. Post signage outside elevator asking people to stand at least 2 m away from the doors and wait for elevator occupant to leave the area before entering. Effective coordination between departments in shared buildings (Duff Roblin and Buller) will be required to implement these steps.
- 7) Water fountains – “Do not use” signs have been posted. Touchless, sensor-activated bottle filler can be used safely (contact Physical Plant before using them if “do not use” sign posted).
- 8) A revised safety protocol has been developed for the use of the lunchrooms.
- a) A revised maximum occupancy has been determined for each building, with 20 min time slots allocated to each lab/group of labs (schedule posted on the door).
  - b) Sign- in and -out sheets will be posted on the door.
  - c) The lunch room will remain available before and after the reserved lunch hours – Sign-in/out required
  - d) Physical distancing (2 m in lunch spaces) should be maintained; masks should be removed only for eating or drinking.
  - e) One person at a time in the kitchen area.
  - f) Hand sanitizing is required upon entry and exit.
  - g) The use of fridges and microwaves is strongly discouraged
  - h) All surfaces touched should be disinfected
  - i) Eating outside is encouraged (physical distancing maintained)
- 9) Maintain physical distancing in washroom, wear a face mask, have only one person at a time washing their hands. Use signs with specific instructions in washrooms (including use of paper towel to open/close doors if necessary) and place a garbage can outside. In building like Duff Roblin with two doors, one could be used as entry and the other as exit. The university should provide hand sanitizer.
- 10) Use of personnel protective equipment (PPE) and non-medical masks.
- a. Wearing a mask (KN95) is required in all indoor spaces (hallways, lobbies, labs, classroom, study spaces, offices, elevators, washroom, greenhouse). Check regularly the University COVID-19 website ([umanitoba.ca/coronavirus](http://umanitoba.ca/coronavirus)) for update on the topic.

- b. Masks are not required if someone is alone in an office/room and physically distanced from others.
  - c. KN95 masks can be generally worn more than one day if they are not soiled, damp or damaged. For information on masks see: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks/about-non-medical-masks-face-coverings.html>
  - d. Face shields/N-95 masks and gloves could be used for specific training on a piece of equipment or during a lab procedure.
  - e. Face shields/masks do not replace physical distancing.
  - f. Use individual glove boxes (labeled).
  - g. Given air circulation in buildings and asymptomatic transmission of COVID-19 the need to wear masks in some locations such as small labs, should be reviewed.
  - h. Gloves in use in research labs should never be used when someone exits the lab. Dispose of used gloves before exiting the lab and put on a new pair if required. When transporting hazardous chemicals from one lab to another one use the one-glove rule (that should be posted in your lab).
- 11) Use posters to remind workers/students about hand-hygiene practices. Routinely wash hands at the designated hand-washing station (close to the entrance/exit if possible) and when entering/exiting the lab. Hand sanitizer and soap should be available. Sanitize the work stations daily after completing lab work. The first person into the lab/office will turn on the lights and sanitize the switch. Anyone leaving after a certain time of day will turn off the light and sanitize door handles and light switches on the way out. Door handles should be sanitized regularly by lab/office occupants.
- 12) Hand sanitizer should be available in hallways and building entrances.
- 13) Ask workers/students to maintain a record of their working hours, location, and contact with anyone. Maintain record of non-lab members entering the lab (workers/students using a specific piece of equipment or Physical Plant)
- 14) Review the working alone policy in your lab, and update all emergency contact numbers and phone availability for supervisors and other lab users.
- 15) There should be no visitors going into labs/offices (including other workers/students from the department, Faculty or University) unless that is required for an experiment and discussed in advance with the supervisor. Limit interactions to those required to work with other members of the lab.
- 16) In-person meetings are permitted in indoor and outdoor spaces on campus in adherence with provincial restrictions and the university Health and Safety protocols (maximum number of participants following provincial gathering size limits, distancing is still recommended and wearing KN95 masks indoors required at all times). Virtual meetings are still recommended during the COVID-19 pandemic, whenever possible.
- 17) Safe work protocols have been developed for:
- a. Greenhouses (Buller and CTC) and growth chamber facilities with restricted access
  - b. Animal care facility
  - c. Shared facilities with equipment like autoclaves and centrifuges (shared by several departments)
  - d. Microscopy facilities

- e. Other shared labs like molecular biology labs or equipment labs
- f. Shared offices/student carrels

**For information on vaccine eligibility see:**

<https://manitoba.ca/covid19/vaccine/eligibility-criteria.html>

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**Immunization cards for fully vaccinated people - applications online at:**

<https://immunizationcard.manitoba.ca/>

**Request to undertake travel and/or field work Form (new form):**

[https://sci.umanitoba.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Faculty-of-Science-travel-and-field-work-request-form\\_August-2021-1.pdf](https://sci.umanitoba.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Faculty-of-Science-travel-and-field-work-request-form_August-2021-1.pdf)

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**Risk-informed decision-making guidelines for workplaces and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic**

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<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/risk-informed-decision-making-workplaces-businesses-covid-19-pandemic.html>

**Disinfectants**

[https://www.whsc.on.ca/Files/Resources/COVID-19-Resources/WHSC\\_Pandemic\\_EvaluatingDisinfectants2020-en.aspx](https://www.whsc.on.ca/Files/Resources/COVID-19-Resources/WHSC_Pandemic_EvaluatingDisinfectants2020-en.aspx)