



**DAR 2020-05: COVID-19: Research Expansion in the DAR, Phase 1**

**Date:** May 28, 2020

**From:** Michael J. Huerkamp, DVM, DACLAM, Director, Division of Animal Resources and with the acknowledgment of Dr. Deborah Mook who spearheaded this plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael J. Huerkamp".

To meet the varied needs of our stakeholders, we provide three different versions of our message. The first is a very brief, 25-word summary. The second is a slightly more in-depth 100-word summary. The third is detailed. We hope this approach will help you find the level of information you require.

**< 25 words**

The DAR is implementing procedures to safely and effectively conduct research at lower density. **We are in this together** and everyone's participation is necessary.

**~100 words**

Investigators must follow policies promulgated by the University and their school or unit (e.g. School of Medicine (SOM), Emory College of Arts and Sciences (ECAS), Rollins School of Public Health (SPH)). DAR is implementing additional processes to support the expansion of research within DAR managed facilities.

1. Maintain social distancing by
  - a. Minimizing visits to the animal facility.
  - b. Scheduling your work in advance.
  - c. Adhering to posted maximum room capacity limits.
  - d. Adhering to recommendations regarding elevator and stair usage.
2. Follow guidance for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
  - a. Cloth face coverings are required at all times.
  - b. Gowns will be assigned.
  - c. Wear additional protections as required by specific work.
3. Hygiene and sanitation
  - a. Wash hands when entering and leaving the animal room.
  - b. Sanitize surfaces before and after work.
  - c. General sanitation of animal facilities will be conducted once daily by a combination of campus services and DAR.

**~ 1000 words**

This document is intended to supplement Emory University and specific unit or school (SOM, ECAS, SPH) guidance as researchers plan to expand their research activities in animal facilities. All personnel are expected to comply with University and unit or school guidance. Our common goal is to conduct research safely and effectively at a reduced density. Achieving this goal will require all participants to

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embrace practices that prevent transmission of virus. In addition, the implementation of new procedures also must consider the availability of critical supplies. **We are in this together and everyone's participation is necessary.** Within the DAR, the following practices have been put in place or altered in consideration of five pillars of mitigation strategy: distancing, hygiene, screening, PPE, and culture.

1. Social distancing

- a. Maximum occupancy of animal rooms
  - i. Animal housing and procedure rooms are limited in capacity by square footage and social distancing requirements.
    - 1. One or two persons may be in the room at a time for extended periods. Room capacity will be specified by signage.
    - 2. One additional person may enter the room transiently (for <5 min). People who enter the room transiently should announce themselves and give the individuals in the room time to move if they are in the area that needs to be accessed.
  - ii. All personnel are always expected to maintain social distancing guidelines of 6 feet.
- b. Close quarters work
  - i. When two people must work within 6 feet of each other (e.g. training or a large animal surgery)
  - ii. Allowed only for a single activity when necessary and for a limited period of time
  - iii. Must adhere to PPE requirements (see PPE section)
- c. Scheduling work
  - i. To minimize personnel traffic in the animal facility, schedule work in advance in the DAR Calendar in Office 365. A description of the process to schedule a room is on the DAR website (<http://www.dar.emory.edu/pi/index.php>) and will also be provided at the time of training.
  - ii. Rooms with 1-person maximum capacity will require both Animal Care and researchers to schedule their time.
  - iii. For rooms with 2-person maximum capacity, the scheduling system will be reserved for research staff. Animal Care should be able to accomplish most of their work using mobile stations and allow researchers to use the biosafety cabinet. This may require animal care and research staff working simultaneously inside the same room.
  - iv. Time limits will not be imposed unless they become necessary. Everyone is expected to book the minimum time needed and to be respectful of other user's needs.
  - v. If rooms have a previously established mechanism for scheduling, that will remain in place.
  - vi. Scheduling support from DAR is based on DAR staff capacity, and can be done using established workflows.
- d. Elevators and stairs
  - i. Follow posted guidance on numbers of passengers in elevator.
  - ii. Taking the stairs or non-animal elevators is encouraged when not moving animals.
  - iii. Facility supervisors can help direct to the appropriate elevator.

1. Hygiene

- a. Wash your hands upon entering and when leaving an animal room.
  - b. Sanitize all work surfaces before and after work with disinfectant spray provided by the DAR.
  - c. Sanitize all common use spaces you have touched prior to departing.
  - d. A general sanitation of the facility will be done once daily by a combination of campus services and DAR.
2. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- a. Face coverings
    - i. A cloth face covering is required at all times when not using one of the masks discussed below. This is to be provided by the individual and may include cloth face coverings previously distributed by the university.
    - ii. Surgical mask
      - 1. Required when working in close quarters (two or more persons within 6 feet of each other).
      - 2. Required when performing surgery, large animal and rodent.
      - 3. Required when working at ABSL2 levels.
      - 4. Required for the HSRB animal facility at all times.
    - iii. N95 masks
      - 1. Required for biohazard work as directed by the Environmental Health and Safety Office (EHSO) based on risk assessment.
      - 2. Required as directed on an as needed basis by Occupational Injury Management (OIM).
  - b. Eye protection is required when working in close quarters. The following can be used:
    - i. Safety glasses with side shields.
    - ii. Face shields. These will be provided by the DAR.
  - c. Gowns
    - i. The DAR will provide dedicated cloth gowns for use in animal rooms. These will be laundered regularly and fresh ones distributed. The practice of wearing lab coats in animal rooms was temporary and should be discontinued.
    - ii. Gowns must be worn when handling animals or working in an animal room but need not be worn if transiently entering a room.
    - iii. Dedicated hooks will be inside animal rooms on which to hang gowns. These can be labeled with your name.
  - d. Gloves must be worn when handling animals or working in the room. These will be provided by the DAR as has previously been the case.
  - e. For general rodent housing rooms, PPE should be donned and doffed in the room. Some exceptions exist and are explained on site.
  - f. PPE provided by the DAR is to be used within the DAR.
  - g. PPE from DAR should not be moved to labs outside of DAR.
3. Screening and contact tracing will be done by the University. See Covid-19 updates on Emory's home page for further information (<https://www.emory.edu/coronavirus/>).
4. Culture
- a. Our joint goal: to keep both ourselves and others safe while effectively conducting research.
  - b. Accomplishing this goal will require
    - i. Attention to detail
    - ii. A willingness to participate fully

- iii. A willingness to gently correct others (kind coaching)
  - iv. A willingness to be corrected
- 5. Changes or adjustments may need to be made based on new information or changing circumstances. Be alert to the potential for changes. These will be communicated in many ways, including email, whiteboards and the DAR TV.

#### **Gaining access to the DAR facilities**

1. Obtain approval to return to campus from your school/college/unit. This step will require training from EHSO in addition to the DAR-specific training outlines below. EHSO's training is entitled "EHSO – Returning to Laboratory Research at Lower Density", and can be found in BioRaft. EHSO's checklist for return to research at lower density, with link to training, can be found here: <http://www.ehso.emory.edu/documents/Return-to-Laboratory-Research-At-Lower-Density-Checklist.pdf>.
2. For the beginning of Stage 1, only personnel previously trained and credentialed by the DAR will be afforded access to the animal facilities.
  - a. DAR-specific training will be required to learn the new processes and procedures that have been implemented. See below for instructions on registering. This training will initially be done via Zoom and will assist with details on room scheduling, management of PPE and sanitation.
  - b. Zoom Q&A sessions will also be provided.
  - c. For those currently with access, training must be completed one week after the official ramp-up date.
  - d. For those currently without access, training must be completed prior to securing access.
  - e. Personnel must provide assurance they will comply with all University, SOM and DAR policies.
3. Notification of training completion will automatically upload to the DAR security team. Provided authorization from your school has been received, access to the facilities will be granted and your name will be forwarded to LITS to be added to the Office 365 scheduling system.
4. Schedule your work in Office 365.
5. Labs are encouraged to
  - a. Be realistic: initial capacity will not be 100%.
  - b. Be flexible: take advantage of off-peak times such as evenings and weekends.
  - c. Be efficient: streamline work to minimize entrances to animal facility.
  - d. Keep resilience strategies in mind to minimize potential setbacks in the event of revisions to the calendar or processes.

**DAR-specific Covid19 training MUST be completed in order to access DAR facilities. To enroll in the DAR Covid19 Access Training course:**

1. Log in to peoplesoft and click the "Emory Learning Management" tile.  
<https://hrprod.emory.edu/psp/hrprod/?cmd=login&languageCd=ENG&>
2. Log in to ELMS.
3. Click the "Find Learning" tile.
4. Enter 265600 in the search bar.
5. Click enroll on a course on the desired date/time. For more details on time, click the course code or the start date.
6. The class enrollment will close at 5 p.m. the day before the class. You will be emailed the zoom information prior to the course.

For questions or to provide feedback, please contact DAR Training at [dartrn@emory.edu](mailto:dartrn@emory.edu).