COVID-19 Guidelines for Teaching Laboratories

NYU TANDON SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

Overview

With the on-going ramp up of the University, it remains essential to follow guidelines on proper protection practices while on the NYU campus. This guide provides further instructions on COVID-19 procedures within the teaching labs to ensure the safety of our students and occupants. Guidelines are subject to change as the pandemic regulations continue to evolve.

Keeping Each Other Safe

- **Wear a face covering over one's nose and mouth at all times:**
  All the members of our NYU community are required to wear a mask or other face covering that covers your nose and mouth at all times, unless you are eating (in which case, keep 6 feet or more between yourself and others), you are alone in a closed office, or you are in your own home.
- **Keep at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) distance between oneself and others:**
  Look for wayfinding clues, like designations of entrances and exits, spacers on hallway floors, and maximum occupancy signs on rooms and elevators. Handshakes and hugs are out; waving 6 feet apart is in.
- **Wash your hands often and use hand sanitizer:**
  Clean your hands frequently, either with soap and water or with alcohol-based sanitizer (you can find new alcohol-based gel dispensers at building entrances as well as within the labs).
- **Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue:**
  If you need to cough or sneeze, do it into a tissue or your elbow, not your hands.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth:**
- Studies have shown that people touch their face upwards of 16 times per hour. However, especially between hand washings, try not to touch your mouth, nose and eyes.
- **Stay home if you don't feel well:**
  If you have symptoms of COVID-19, stay home! Contact your professor or supervisor and let them know you are taking a sick day. Notify the COVID-19 Prevention & Response Team. Questions or need medical care? Contact the Student Health Center(students) or your doctor (employees) and follow their advice.

COVID-19 Monitoring and Reporting

In the interest of maintaining a safe campus environment, NYU has put in place testing and quarantining policies. The testing program and procedures refer to tests designed to detect the presence of a COVID-19 infection, not antibody tests. NYU instituted extensive testing for all community members. There is no cost to the NYU community for participating in the testing program. Please be aware that in New York, local law requires all visitors travelling from outside the country or from restricted states to quarantine for two weeks.

All students, faculty, and employees are required to get tested and submit verification before entering NYU buildings in addition to completing the Daily COVID-19 Screener available on the NYU Mobile App each day you plan to enter any NYU academic or administrative building.

Students

- **Testing Sites at NYU for Students**

Testing is available on-campus at Gould Plaza (40 West 4th St and 6 MetroTech Center (Tandon gym). Appointment availability is updated continually. Please check back here for further information.

Schedule Your Appointment
- Use the exact same last name and preferred name that is listed in Albert.
- Enter your student ID number (N number) including the N (ex: N12345678).

Students may also be tested through their regular healthcare provider, an urgent care facility, a pharmacy or another facility as noted below in the “Additional Testing Sites in the Tri-State Area” section.

- **Submitting Results and Building Access**

Test results must be submitted regardless of whether they are positive or negative through the COVID Prevention & Response Team Portal For Students. A negative test results must be submitted before ID access into NYU buildings is reactivated. The COVID-19 Prevention & Response Team will contact you with further instructions about follow-up.

Note, students won’t have access to NYU buildings except their residence halls before **September 2nd** (with a few exceptions, such as a student working with a research team that’s been permitted back on campus).

- **Exceptions for Testing Requirement**

Students who are taking classes remotely **and** are not in NYU housing **and** will not be coming to campus **and** will not be interacting with members of the NYU community do not need to be tested.

Essential Faculty and Researchers (including PhD students and Postdocs)

- **Testing Sites at NYU for Employees**

NYU Langone Health has made provisions to provide expedited testing for NYU employees. Call 646-987-3524, Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.- 5 p.m. to make an appointment or set up a MyChart account and schedule your testing online. If you have any trouble making an appointment you should email covid19@nyu.edu for help.

Employees may also be tested through their regular healthcare provider, an urgent care facility, a pharmacy or another facility as noted below in the "Additional Testing Sites in the Tri-State Area" section.

- **Submitting Results and Building Access**

Test results must be submitted regardless of whether they are positive or negative through the COVID Prevention & Response Team Portal For Employees. A negative test results must be submitted before ID access into NYU buildings is reactivated. The COVID-19 Prevention & Response Team will contact you with further instructions about follow-up.

Additional Testing Sites in the Tri-State Area

- NYC DOH COVID testing site (can search by any address or state/county/zip code, including areas outside of NY)
- New York State search page
- New Jersey search page
- Connecticut testing done by CVS MinuteClinic
- Testing at Rite-Aid in NY and NJ (note that Rite-Aid does not have an NYC testing center)

Daily Screening Required

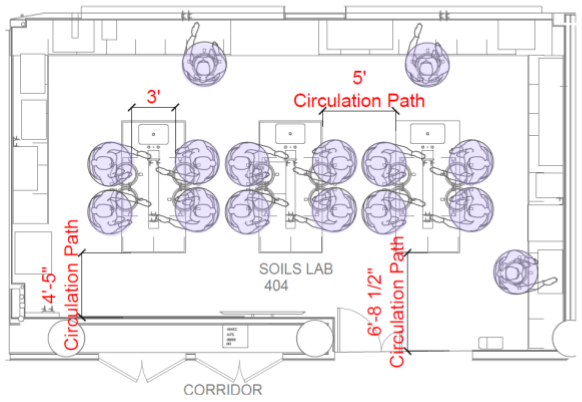
All students, faculty, and employees are required to also complete the Daily COVID-19 Screener available on the NYU Mobile App each day you plan to enter any NYU academic or administrative building.

Teaching Labs/ Recitations

Social Distancing

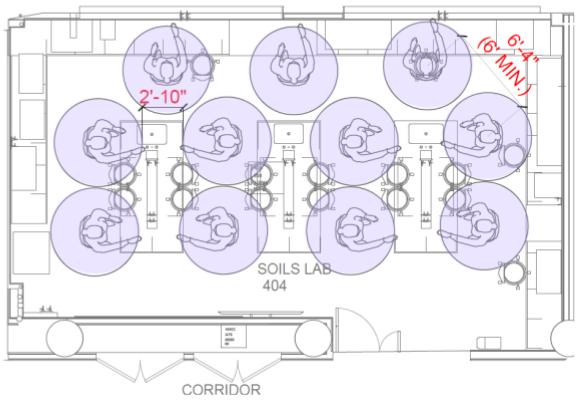
This year, to achieve more physical distancing in teaching lab settings (6 feet) distance between students is to be kept when applicable. We are reducing the number of people permitted in teaching labs with a reduction of 30-50% of their existing capacities, as well as introducing PPE in all of the teaching labs. Look for signage indicating current maximums.

EXISTING OCCUPANCY: 15



E.g. of lab density **prior** to COVID-19

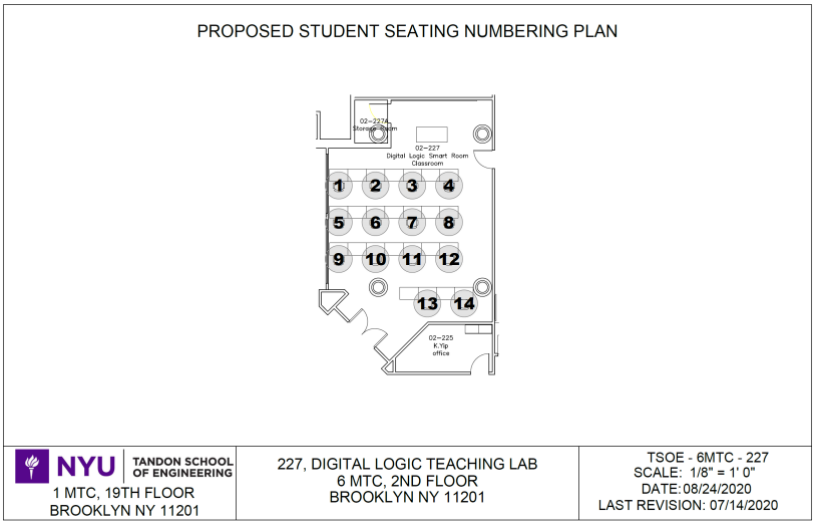
PROPOSED
COVID OCCUPANCY: 11



E.g. of lab density **during** COVID-19

Assigned Seating

For Fall 2020, teaching labs will be laid out with seat numbers for the newly assigned room occupancies. These seat assignments are to be kept for the entirety of the semester, when feasible with lab curricular activities. See "**Shared Workstations**" below for more details.



If you require disability accommodations, please contact your instructor **prior to class**. For additional support, please refer to the Moses Center for Student Accessibility for information on equal educational opportunity and participation for students of all abilities.

Proposed Break Schedule

Breaks will be introduced within the individual lab sections to assist with truncating the longevity of exposure of people in the same setting. These breaks will be scheduled in correlation to the

duration of the lab (i.e., 15-minute break every hour for 3+ hour labs, 10-minute break in the middle of a 2-hour lab section, etc.).

Example of lab breaks:

- 10 a.m. – 11:50 a.m. section:
  10-minute break should be middle of the lab section at around 10:50am
- 11 a.m. – 1:50 p.m. section:
  15-minute break should be middle of the lab section at around 12:15pm
- 12:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. section:
  15-minute break every hour so around 1:30 p.m., another break at around 2:30 p.m., etc.

Shared Workstations

The separation between working stations should be 6 feet apart. Students should be assigned a specific working station, and avoid rotating to different spaces within the location. However, if this is not possible and the workstation must be shared due to rotating schedules, cleaning and disinfecting procedures must be followed at the beginning and end of each session.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

General PPE (to be utilized in the majority of our teaching labs):

- Disposable face mask
- Safety glasses / goggles / face shields
- Gloves

Specialized PPE (only to be utilized in Bio-molecular Science & Organic Chemistry Labs):

- KN95 masks (or approved equal PPE set-up per EHS, N95 masks will continue to be used only where previously approved by EHS for specific applications)
- Safety glasses / goggles / face shields
- Disposable lab coats
- Gloves

Reusable PPE should be assigned to students at the beginning of the semester. Students should label their names on the items to avoid mix ups, and have them stored in a clean, breathable container like a paper bag between uses.

Gloves Usage, Removal and Disposal

Although gloves are an additional layer of protection, practicing proper hand hygiene, which includes the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer or handwashing is a simple yet effective way to prevent the spread of pathogens and infections. Do not touch your face or readjust your hair or glasses with your gloves on as they can still transfer contaminants to other surfaces. Do not wear gloves outside of the laboratory.

Inspect gloves for signs of degradation or puncture before use. Test for pinholes by blowing or trapping air inside and rolling them out. Do not fill them with water, as this makes the gloves uncomfortable and may make it more difficult to detect a leak when wearing the glove.

- **Removal**

  Change gloves when switching to different tasks, as well as when there is any sign of contamination. Be careful not to handle anything but the materials involved in the procedure while wearing gloves. Touching equipment, phones, wastebaskets or other surfaces may cause contamination. Gloves should be removed appropriately to avoid skin contact with the exterior of the glove. Instructions on how to remove your gloves are available for review.

- **Disposal**
  - After use in laboratories, remove and place disposable gloves directly into the appropriate waste disposal container based on hazard.
  - For non-laboratory locations, e.g. when gloves are used to disinfect surfaces in an office or breakroom, remove and place into the regular trash.

KN95 (*N95: for specific applications previously approved by EHS only)

Note that based on manufacturer recommendations, N-95 respirators are designed for one-time use. The CDC and NIOSH do not formally recommend decontamination and re-use of N-95s, but acknowledge that in times of scarcity, the strategies below are options that can be considered based on individual judgment and the institutional resources available.

- Current guidelines encourage wearing a face shield over the N95 to decrease the chances of soiling the respirator.
- Importantly, when reusing an N95, practice donning/doffing to avoid contamination of the inside or outside of the respirator at all times. Instructions on how to don/doff a respirator are available for review.

Proper storage of this technique requires either hanging the respirators to dry, or keeping them in a clean, breathable container like a paper bag between uses. A seal check should be performed before each use.

These masks have not been certified in accordance with government standards for use as, or a substitute for, respiratory protective devices or surgical face masks. To the extent that the labs and programs wish to use them, they are to be used only as a form of face covering for source control, like cloth or disposable face coverings; they do not provide additional protection.

Eye Protection (safety glasses, goggles, face shields) Maintenance

If your lab is using eye protection, each student will be assigned their own items. It is recommended that all students write their names on their designated PPE as identifiers to avoid any mix ups.

Many manufacturers recommend using 70% alcohol solutions for the decontamination (do not use ethanol or other disinfectants on laser safety glasses, but instead use mild soap and warm water). Inspect eyewear regularly, especially after cleaning. Some disinfectants should be rinsed with water and the PPE should be fully dried before reuse. Disposable face shields can also be disinfected and reused as long as they are not compromised.

Instructions on how to remove your face shield are available for review.

Shared PPE

To reduce the potential for transmission of COVID-19 through shared PPE items, it is generally recommended that PPE items be used by only one person when possible. Consider designating people for specific tasks requiring specialized PPE and/or obtain multiple sets to avoid sharing PPE. When it is not possible to avoid sharing the PPE, items must be disinfected before and after each use to protect the wearer from possible contamination.

Disposable PPE should **never** be shared.

Examples of shared PPE:

- **Cryogenic Gloves**
  - Consider wearing new clean disposable gloves under cryogenic gloves.
  - Users must be very careful not to get cryogens inside the cryogenic gloves while dispensing it.
- **Glovebox Gloves**
  - Wear new clean disposable gloves under the reusable gloves.
  - Disinfect gloves before and after use according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Best practices for cleaning and disinfecting of lab spaces should be followed to mitigate COVID-19 spread. Disinfectant wipes will be available in the labs for use.

1. Use EPA-Approved Disinfectants

Use a disinfectant that is certified by the EPA to be effective against COVID-10.
There are two easy ways to determine this:

- Verify the disinfectant is on the EPA's List N registry of disinfectants. Disinfectants are listed by both name and by EPA ID number. If the product name is not on the list check the EPA number.
- The fine print of the label will list Coronavirus among the organisms approved.

Common Laboratory Disinfectants Approved for COVID-19

- 10% freshly prepared household bleach (0.5% sodium hypochlorite)
- 70% alcohol (e.g., ethanol or isopropanol)

Note: Clorox and Lysol products are effective against the novel Coronavirus, but please check EPA List as not all are necessarily effective. **Do not mix cleaning chemicals together, especially with bleach!**

2. Read the directions

- Follow the product's directions.
- Check "use sites" and "surface types" to see where you can use the product.
- Read the "precautionary statements."

3. Pre-clean the surface

- Make sure to wash the surface with light soap and water if the directions mention pre-cleaning or if the surface is visibly dirty.

4. Follow the contact time

- Contact time is indicated in the product's directions. EfferSan and alcohol contact time is 5 minutes.
- The surface should remain wet the whole time to ensure the product is effective, and the disinfectant should be left to evaporate from the surface for the appropriate contact time.
- If using a disinfectant which does not evaporate, wipe after the appropriate contact time.
- Do not spray disinfectant products directly onto the surfaces, as this could lead to aerosolization of the virus.
- Be sure to have adequate ventilation when using any disinfectant.
- Spray disinfectant directly onto disposable towels to clean surfaces.

5. Wear gloves and wash your hands

- After cleaning, dispose of gloves and immediately wash hands.
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds after removing the gloves.

6. Store disinfectant products safely

- Keep lids tightly closed.

Who is Responsible for Cleaning?

The student, staff member, and/or faculty member (the end user) who is about to use the lab benchtops and shared equipment are responsible for cleaning and disinfecting the area **before and after use**. This includes high-touch surfaces.

Labs will continue to receive general cleaning (mopping floors, trash removal and wiping doors and vertical structure (e.g., glass windows/ wall/ etc.) by NYU Housekeeping daily at the end of the day.

High-Touch Locations and Equipment

The following are locations and equipment with high frequency of handling and contact. As such these represent a higher probability of viral loading in the work area and should be disinfected on a routine basis. Special care should be taken to disinfect equipment that makes direct contact with skin (e.g. microscopes, etc.). All shared equipment must be disinfected before and after use.

- Benchtops
- Equipment handles and latches
- Equipment controls and touchpads
- Drawer and cabinet handles
- Bin and water incubator lids
- Hand tools
- Micropipettors and other shared tools
- Faucet handles and sprayer grips
- Baskets, bins, trays, etc.
- Outsides of shared chemical bottles and caps
- Chair backs and armrests
- Pens, whiteboard markers, etc.

Sensitive Equipment

Consult the manufacturer recommendations on cleaning products appropriate for your specific electronics and specialty equipment. If no guidance is available, consider the use of alcohol-based wipes or spray containing at least 70% alcohol.

Certain equipment may be damaged by spraying disinfectants directly onto components (e.g., computer keyboard and mouse, key-style equipment touchpads, on/off switches, power tools, etc.) and by harsher disinfectants such as bleach. If you do not have disinfectant wipes, these items can be disinfected by soaking a disposable dry wipe or clean soft cloth in the alcohol or disinfectant until it is soaked but not quite dripping, and then using it to wipe the keyboard, touchpads, etc., being careful to avoid getting liquid into any openings. Avoid pooling of liquids.

- **When Cleaning Electronics**
  - Use only soft, lint-free cloth. Avoid abrasive cloths, paper towels, or similar items.
  - Avoid excessive wiping, which might cause damage.
  - Unplug all external power sources, devices and cables.
  - Do not get moisture into any openings.
  - Do not use aerosol sprays, bleaches, abrasives.
  - Do not spray cleaners directly onto the item.

Additional guidance on how to clean classroom technology and audio visual equipment are available for review.

Additional Resources

- CDC: Guide on Masks
- CDC: Guide on Protecting Yourself & Others
- CDC: How to Clean and Disinfect
- CDC: List of Tips for Social Distancing
- CDC: Support for Young Adults to Manage Stress and Mental Health
- EPA: Six Steps for Safe and Effective Disinfectant Use (PDF)
- NYU's Guide to Commuting Safely During COVID-19