



لجنة الصحة والسلامة 2020
Health and Safety Committee 2020

كلية الطب
Faculty of Medicine

جامعة الكويت
Kuwait University



Protocol for Safe Return to Clinical and Non-Clinical Laboratories in FOM During COVID-19 Pandemic

Every single one of us has the responsibility and the power to keep our workplace safe, please continue to take these steps to keep yourself and those around you safe.

Each Department/Unit should designate and announce a safety officer to ensure and oversee that safety measures are practiced, in accordance with the Health and Safety committee protocols. This includes adherence to all the operational items listed below.

The person in charge of the laboratory (**Chief Technician/Senior Technician /PI etc..**) should:

1. Perform a visual site inspection to walls, ceilings, AC vents, windows etc...to check for signs of water leakage or other damage. Any problem should be reported to the Service Department.
2. Note any unusual odor.
3. Inspect electrical equipment e.g freezers, fridge, incubators, water purification systems, ice machines etc...
4. Ensure fire extinguishers are functional, and been maintained recently, report any problem to the Security and Safety Department.
5. Test eyewash stations and emergency showers. report any problem to Service Department.
6. Inspect compressed gas cylinders.
7. Ensure that chemicals and hazardous material are stored safely and are not compromised, expired, leaking or damaged.
8. Check telephone lines and computers.
9. Ensure availability of enough biohazard waste bins/containers. Hazardous waste should be kept securely until collected for final disposal.
10. Include proper signage and social distancing indicators to reinforce face covering, physical distancing and personal hygiene. Signage will be provided by the H&S Committee.
11. Restrooms should be posted with maximum occupancy signage (One person at a time).
12. Make sure that each person working in the laboratory has proper COVID-19 awareness, before returning to the Laboratory.
13. Develop a detailed cleaning schedule and a disinfecting protocol, including frequently touched/infrequently touched surfaces and equipment, outline the method and frequency of cleaning/disinfecting, follow the manufacturer's recommendation for the appropriate disinfection procedure for equipment. The following disinfectants are recommended for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) (1):

- a- Chlorine bleach 1000 ppm (0.1%) for general surfaces disinfection and 10,000 ppm (1%) for treating body fluid spills
 - b- 62- 71% Ethanol.
 - c- 0.5% hydrogen peroxide
 - Obtain a copy of Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)
 - Staff should wear PPE and follow standard precautions while cleaning/disinfecting.
14. Relocate shared equipment/work stations needed to be in compliance with physical distancing guidelines. The general approach of one person per individual room and/or physical barriers should be adopted. Shared equipment/workstations should be disinfected after each use.
 15. Avoid clustering of staff in the Laboratory, observe occupancy limits as per the Civil Services regulations (30%, 50%, 75% etc..) and always maintain 2 meters' distance.
 16. Rearrange Coffee room seating to accommodate social distancing guidelines of 2 meters. High touch surfaces (tables, chairs, door handles and appliances) should be disinfected once every two hours.
 17. Ensure that adequate PPE and safety supplies are stocked e.g., gloves, safety glasses/face shield, masks, Chlorine bleach and disinfectant.
 - a. Reference/Clinical Laboratories are responsible for providing their own PPE/ Safety guidelines in that Laboratory e.g masks, gloves, face shield, gowns and disinfectant.
 - b. Research PI is responsible for providing PPE/ Safety guidelines in that Laboratory e.g masks, gloves, face shield, gowns and disinfectant for the project usage, from the research grants.
 18. Promote good basic hygiene by reinforcing frequent hand washing/sanitizing.
 19. Staff should not leave home without a mask. All staff should be wearing masks all times while at the Faculty. Masks should be discarded in a designated bin.
 20. Staff should wear PPE were required, while working in the Laboratory e.g gloves, masks, coats/gowns, goggles/face shield. It is strictly prohibited to wear lab coats in the Cafeteria.
 21. Make sure that Clinical samples, especially samples from known or suspected COVID-19, are handled and processed in a BSL-2 Laboratory following standard precautions. SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) virus isolation in Cell Culture should be strictly conducted in a BSL-3 facility using BSL-3 practice.
 22. All samples coming from outside the Faculty, should be submitted at the Reception Area in the Ground floor, all departments sharing this station should follow the below rules:
 - a- No porters, from outside, will be allowed to deliver samples directly to any Department.
 - b- The Reception Area is only open during working hours. Ext number: 36100
 - c- A clear list with test names, representative technician/s names and telephone numbers (mobile and landline) should be available at the station in the Ground floor.
 - d- The staff in charge will call the relevant Department to send down a staff to collect their own samples. All staff should wear PPE and follow standard precautions while handling the samples. Staff carrying samples to their own departments should adopt the one hand glove approach and should use a barrier while using the elevator or the intercom to avoid contaminating the buttons.

- e- The Reception Area should be maintained clean, tidy, disinfected after each use and waste should be cleared by the user.
- 23. Ensure that visitors/maintenance engineers/company sales in your department are wearing masks and complying with social distancing and hand hygiene. Provide maintenance engineers with PPE while at work.
- 24. Staff temperature will be checked at the Faculty entrances, anyone who has a fever of more than 37.5°C will not be allowed to enter the building. Ensure that staff are aware of MOH policy regarding suspected /exposed /confirmed COVID-19 cases, who should report ill and not come to work. Symptoms include fever, cough, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, and loss of taste or smell.
- 25. Make sure staff adhere to the working hours as per the Kuwait University General Secretary resolution. Attendance sheets should be used to track employee attendance instead of finger printing.
- 26. Ensure that staff are following the guidelines and any concerns are addressed.
- 27. Make sure that staff are aware and adhere to, the maximum occupancy allowed in elevators, and follow floor signs at the faculty.
- 28. Consult with the Health and Safety Committee for any concerns regarding the safety measures on campus by **E-mail: zahraa.tamimi@ku.edu.kw**. There will be regular pop-up inspections by the committee members; any breach will be reported to the dean.
- 29. The Faculty of Medicine will not be held legally accountable for any breach of the Health and safety regulations by the Staff.

References:

1. WHO, Laboratory biosafety guidance related to the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)
2. CDC, Interim Guidelines for biosafety and COVID-19
3. Harvard University, Steps for a safe return to Labs