

**NORWICH BIOSCIENCE INSTITUTES
COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT**

DEPARTMENT/ORGANISATION: Earlham Institute

Persons Affected:	Workers from Earlham Institute, visitors such as contractors
Activities:	Laboratory and support activities
Work Locations:	Earlham Institute laboratories and other support areas
Assessor:	Sam Lister
Date:	26.12.20

RISK ASSESSMENT:

1. What are the hazards present from the work activity?

Possible exposure of workers to coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 which may be present in the workplace as a communicable disease which could be distributed by infected persons on site during the current COVID-19 pandemic situation.

2. Consider factors that could affect the workers ability to do work or make them at particular risk from harm whilst at work:

Some groups may be more at risk of being infected and/or have an adverse outcome if infected. The higher risk groups include older males, those with a high Body Mass Index (BMI >40), those who have a health condition such as diabetes and some Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds.

If you are over 60 or clinically vulnerable you could be at higher risk of severe illness and should be especially careful to follow the rules and minimise contacts with others. You should continue to wash your hands more frequently than usual and maintain thorough cleaning of any frequently touched areas.

Norfolk moves into Tier 4 on 26th December 2020 and that the Govt advice is that any Clinically Extremely Vulnerable workers should work from home and if they are unable to work from home they are advised not to come to work.

A risk assessment must be conducted for any clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable workers. This must be formally approved by the Health and Safety team. Contact health.safety@nbi.ac.uk for assistance.

Workers or visitors such as contractors could be at risk of coming into direct contact with a person who is infected with coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. Workers could also be at risk of indirectly becoming exposed to the coronavirus by touching a contaminated surface and then touching their face or ingesting food without effectively washing or sanitising their hands first.

Close proximity working at <2m should be risk assessed and a decision taken on a case by case basis as to whether the work is essential and whether appropriate additional control measures can be included for safe working.

First Aiders may be at increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 when providing first aid assistance. Certain first aid procedures may require a first aider to be closer than the recommended 2m social distancing. See the separate Risk Assessment for First Aiders Treating Potentially Infectious Persons.

3. Existing risk control measures:

COVID-Secure Status

The site has in place COVID-Secure measures and regular monitoring is performed to ensure standards are maintained as detailed in the Govt guidance for research facilities. Full details of the arrangements are provided in the Safe Working Requirements document which is regularly reviewed and circulated to all workers. The Govt guidance for research facilities is observed:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/labs-and-research-facilities>

Home Working

Those who can work effectively from home should work from home. You should only come to work with your Line Manager's approval following the COVID-Secure arrangements and observing 2m safe social distancing. In the current COVID-19 pandemic situation social distancing must be observed, this may require work rotas for workers on site to avoid overcrowding and some office work may need to be done from home to minimise risk.

Social Distancing Measures

2m social distancing measures are applied as standard for all workers. Rotas are used to minimise the numbers of workers on site and working hours are staggered where possible. If workers need to perform the same task at the same time, sub-teams of 2 or 3 people who always work together will be used, with suitable PPE to minimise potential infection between staff.

Restrictions are in place for how many workers can enter an area this is indicated by signage. If more than one person can use a space where 2m social distancing is not possible, working back-to-back or side-by-side is favoured. Face-to-face working is avoided. The number of workers in each area is agreed by the line manager and lab/operational manager responsible for the work area.

Meetings are held virtually. Essential person-to-person meetings have a maximum of 6 persons, and the 2m social distancing is observed and a large well-ventilated room is used. The meeting organiser is responsible for checking room layout and that occupancy ensures 2m social distancing and ventilation is adequate. Approved room layouts for furniture and seating positions should be observed, any changes should ensure equivalent COVID-Secure arrangements. The meeting organiser is responsible for ensuring the sharing of pens and documents and other objects is avoided and that hand sanitiser is provided. Tables, shared equipment and touchpoints should be cleaned before and after use.

It may be necessary to arrange other measures for the room such as screens or face masks if social distancing or fresh air ventilation is not adequate. The arrangements required for specific meetings should be determined by assessing the meeting format, the meeting location and the number of persons attending.

The meeting organiser is also responsible for checking if any vulnerable workers are attending. If vulnerable workers are attending additional measures may be required, such as ensuring the person sits directly by an open window or door and not in the middle of a room.

Movement inside buildings follows one-way systems in the majority of common areas. Where this is not possible, passing and waiting places have been clearly marked to avoid contact with others with less than 2m social distancing. Marking and signage is used to remind workers of social distancing on reception, stairs, atrium, corridors, and open plan offices. 2m socially distanced break out spaces have been marked in the atrium and on the 2nd floor. Only one worker is to use this space at a time.

Worker breaks are staggered. Workers are reminded to use handrails for safe ascent and descent of stairs but to not touch their face until they have washed or sanitised their hands. Workers are asked to avoid using the lifts where possible. When usage is required the maximum occupancy is clearly

signposted, and markings on where people can stand is indicated when occupancy is more than one person (Goods lift).

Smoking and vaping shelters are designated for single occupancy.

Hygiene and Cleanliness

Workers are reminded to wash their hands regularly and thoroughly for at least 20 seconds and to dry hands thoroughly. Guidance from NHS is provided; <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/>

Hand sanitiser is provided. Instruction is given that hands should be washed when arriving at work, when leaving to go home, before and after meal breaks, before and after using the toilet. Hand sanitisers are provided throughout work areas and workers are reminded to use them if washing facilities are not available.

Workers are reminded to avoid touching their face, to catch coughs and sneezes in a tissue and to immediately safely discard it, then wash or sanitise their hands.

Workers are reminded to regularly clean and disinfect their workstations and work surfaces, local touchpoints, equipment, tools, phone etc. The sharing of equipment and tools is to be minimised and decontamination of surfaces is conducted after every use. The Cleaning team provide enhanced cleaning and touchpoint disinfection in the buildings. A personal device called Doormate¹ is provided to workers at EI to minimise hand to touchpoint contact.

Health Monitoring

Workers are asked not to come to work if they, or anyone they live with has a high temperature (above 37.8°C) or a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change in the sense of smell and taste. In this instance workers should stay at home for 10 days from the onset of symptoms. Medical assistance should be immediately sought if required; NHS 111 (<https://111.nhs.uk/>) or 119 if you don't have internet access.

NHS Test and Trace QR code posters are displayed on entrances to site buildings.

COVID-19 Testing is available for EI workers and household members if showing COVID-19 symptoms.

Personal Protective Equipment

Workers are provided with the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment for the work tasks they need to perform. This is determined by risk assessment.

There is additional provision of surgical masks and non-laboratory gloves that are provided for worker comfort and re-assurance whilst at work. These are not for when workers are carrying out duties involving hazardous work materials. Workers have access to guidance on how to safely put on and remove surgical masks:

https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/epi-win/how-to-use-mask-v0-1-print.pdf?sfvrsn=64ba1493_2

Vehicles

We do not expect workers to need to use any pool vehicles for business use during this time. However, if an emerging need arises, all vehicles are designated for single occupancy.

First Aiders and Emergencies

In an emergency, help is summoned by phoning 333 from an internal phone or 01603 450333 from a mobile.

First Aiders may be at increased risk due to social distancing and the potential treatment of an infectious person. First Aiders are instructed to follow the 'NBI Procedure for a Potentially Infectious Person at Work'. This details the need to maintain a 2m safe distance where possible and the use of emergency

response kits for treatment of an infectious persons. It also explains implementing safe strategies, isolation of any person showing COVID-19 symptoms and measures to minimise contact.

Training has been provided for First Aiders in the hazards of COVID-19, safe procedures including the correct donning and removal of PPE. This is fully detailed in the 'NBI Procedure for a Potentially Infectious Person at Work'.

First Aiders are instructed not to give mouth to mouth resuscitation and if CPR is required they should only give 'chest only compressions'.

Disinfection and Waste for First Aid Activities

Detailed disinfection, hand hygiene and waste handling processes have been prepared for first aider activities as advised by Public Health England and following Local Rules for waste handling. Any waste or contaminated items such as PPE that require incineration following treatment of a suspected COVID-19 case are placed in sealed clinical waste bags for disposal by a registered waste contractor. Disinfection of affected surfaces uses chlorine-based disinfectants (sodium hypochlorite) as these are recognised as being the most effective. Disposable equipment is used for cleaning where possible and this is discarded as clinical waste after cleaning is completed.

1. Prepare a working concentration of 2,500ppm active chlorine
2. Use 25ml of the 10% sodium hypochlorite from Stores (01032500) in 1 litre of water. Leave for a minimum contact time of 10 minutes

Bioguard disinfectant spray can be used for fabric and surfaces that sodium hypochlorite would damage by the bleaching action.

On completion of providing first aid treatment for a potentially infectious person, First Aiders safely remove PPE according to the 'NBI Procedure for a Potentially Infectious Person at Work'.

Supporting COVID testing on the Norwich Research Park.

Any work involving EI workers supporting others on the park with COVID testing will follow a separate and detailed risk assessment before work will commence.

4. <i>Level of risk:</i>	Low:	X	Moderate:		High:	
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FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED TO CONTROL RISK

Regular review of the Public Health England website, Government websites and other health and safety professional bodies to monitor daily updates for infectious disease guidance. The risk assessment and control measures will be updated in response to changes in Government guidance.

The risk assessment will also be updated in response to any local changes or new information of relevance to the assessment.

Any potentially higher risk work activities that require workers to be within 2m of others, or working with the COVID virus testing pipelines, will be risk assessed and a decision taken on a case by case basis as to whether the work is essential and whether appropriate additional control measures can be included for safe working.

VALIDATION - This is a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks. The risk assessment should be reviewed regularly and if there are any changes or problems.

Name: Samantha Lister (Head of HSEQA)
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