Update from the Safety Office
The Safety Office and the Return to Campus Working Group continue working with departments and individuals across the campus community to ensure a safe return to campus.
Departments have been evaluating what work needs to be done on campus and what can continue remotely. Where there is a return to campus, departments are submitting Operational Safety Plans detailing how they will maintain safety during COVID-19. Many labs have already submitted Lab Research Safety Plans and regained access to their labs to continue their work.
New procedures have been developed to help keep employees, students and professors safe including mandatory face masks in common areas and reporting of visits to campus buildings using Campus Check-In. Building hours have been modified and open buildings have dedicated entrances. Spaces have been assigned occupancy limits, and traffic flow patterns have been marked in many buildings. Environmental Services has also implemented a plan to keep the campus, especially high touch surfaces, cleaned to public health standards.
Regular safety program activities continue including Joint Health and Safety Committee inspections, hazardous waste drop-offs and pick-ups, asbestos surveys, fire drills, lifting device inspections, ergonomic assessments and health and safety training.
Please continue to monitor the COVID-19 information page for updates.

Building status information
You can now access building hours and designated entrance information for all open University buildings on the What’s open on campus page. Information for locked buildings will also be posted in the coming days.
As campus activities and public health needs continue to evolve throughout the term, building access may change. Check back frequently to stay up to date on building statuses and remember that building entrances and exits will be clearly marked with signage.
Contact Doug Dye with questions related to building entrances and exits.
Expanded hours for hazardous waste drop-offs at the main campus ESF

On August 10th, the Environmental Safety Facility (ESF) moved to a scheduling system that requires all hazardous waste drop-offs and pick-ups to be booked in advance using Microsoft Outlook. This system has been working well and we thank everyone for following the procedures in place. Due to an increase in demand, the ESF will be opening more bookable timeslots for hazardous waste drop-offs. Beginning September 8th, the main campus ESF is open Monday to Friday from 11 am to 12 pm. Please remember to book a time slot in advance through Microsoft Outlook. Refer to the Safety Office’s Hazardous Waste Standard page for up to date information on facility hours, booking time slots and traffic flow guidelines.

Mandatory reporting of visits to campus buildings

The University has developed a tool called Campus Check-In that will help monitor campus building occupancy levels and assist with the contact tracing of COVID-19 cases should there be any positive cases on our campus. Effective, September 8, 2020, you must record every visit to campus buildings using Campus Check-In. Refer to the Campus Check-In page for more information.

COVID-19 compliance inspections

Labs

As part of the University’s return to campus plan, the Safety Office worked closely with departments and individuals from across the University to develop guidelines and templates for researchers to use as they plan a safe return to their labs. We have received many Laboratory Research Safety Plans and thank all who have followed the guidelines and templates while planning their return. Our next step is to ensure safety plans are being followed. This means that in the very near future, various individuals will be entering research spaces to determine how well the Laboratory Research Safety Plans have been
implemented. Non-compliance will be reported to Chairs and Deans for immediate resolution. Repeat or major compliance issues may result in temporary shutdown of a lab’s operations.

What can you do?

- Principal investigators should ensure they have trained their staff on the approved Laboratory Research Safety Plan and frequently visit the lab to verify compliance.

Refer to the [COVID-19 Laboratory Checklist](#) for guidance.

- Grad students, post-doctoral fellows and researchers should ensure they understand the Laboratory Research Safety Plan and their role within that plan. All researchers are responsible for following occupancy limits, scheduling systems and decontamination schedules outlined in the approved Laboratory Research Safety Plan.

Contact [Dhananjai Borwankar](#) with questions about lab COVID-19 compliance inspections.

**Other workplaces**

The Safety Office wants to remind supervisors that they are responsible for physically inspecting their workplace at least monthly to ensure COVID-19 controls are implemented and being followed.

To support supervisors with this task, the Safety Office developed the [Workplace Supervisor Checklist](#).

Departmental health and safety coordinators and committees will be following up with supervisors to ensure these monthly inspections are being done.

Contact [Elizabeth Ney](#) with questions about other workplace inspections.

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**Lab office use by grad students, post-doctoral fellows and researchers during COVID-19**

The University has developed tools and guidelines for departments based on public health guidance and the best science available. Among the recommended controls, the two most effective are to work remotely where possible and to maintain physical distancing when on campus.

For these controls to be effective, the University has taken steps to reduce campus occupancy. This affects lab office use by grad students, post-doctoral fellows and researchers.

The Safety Office wants to remind everyone that in order for lab office space to be used, it must be covered under an approved Laboratory Research Safety Plan.

Researchers, grad students and post-doctoral fellows must abide by their safety plan and can only use office space during the times they are scheduled to be in the lab. **If you are not scheduled to be in the lab, you cannot and should not be in an office.**

Occupancy limits also apply and must be posted at the entrance. Consider this
example:
A lab has an occupancy limit of 5 and the associated research group has 10 researchers and each researcher has office space. For this research group, only 5 researchers can ever be on campus at a time. If there are 3 researchers in the lab, only 2 can be in an office. If 5 researchers are in the lab, the office should be empty.

Faculty members must ensure that daily activities coincide with an approved Laboratory Research Safety Plan. Everyone’s cooperation is necessary to ensure that our campus remains safe and that research can continue through the pandemic.

Contact Dhananjai Borwankar with questions.

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**October fire drills**

Fire drills will be held in some of our buildings in October. Drills are conducted in accordance with Ontario Fire Code to ensure building occupants understand the fire/evacuation procedures and that all building systems work properly. Building coordinators and fire wardens will be advised about the fire drill times and dates in advance.

It is mandatory to evacuate a building upon hearing the fire alarm. Please review the fire/evacuation procedures posted on your health and safety bulletin board so you are prepared for any evacuation.

Physical distancing requirements for COVID-19 still apply when evacuating a building, waiting at the form-up area, and re-entering the building. Remember to maintain approximately 2 metres distance during all stages of an evacuation and please wear a face mask or other appropriate covering in case physical distancing becomes a challenge.

See the Safety Office’s [fire safety page](mailto:safety@uwaterloo.ca) for more information.

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This message is sent from the Safety Office

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