

Yale Environmental Health & Safety

Application checklist for laboratories that request to work with COVID-19 specimens

First Step: Register your work with Yale EHS

Yale EHS is requiring all PIs to register their COVID-19 clinical specimen and RNA research with our Office using our online registration system.

- *If you are planning **recombinant work** with SARS-CoV-2 genetic material, please submit an rDNA registration.*
- *If you are planning to handle or receive **clinical samples** from COVID-19 patients, or environmental samples to be tested for SARS-CoV-2, please submit a SARS-CoV-2 / COVID-19 registration.*
- *If you are planning to work with infectious **SARS-CoV-2 virus**, please update your Bio General registration and submit or update your Infectious Agent registration.*

Please follow these steps to register your work prior to initiation:

1. Go to our EHS Integrator homepage: <https://ehsis.yale.edu/EHSIntegrator>
2. Sign in by using your NetID and password
3. Click on 'Registration' tab on the left side of the page
4. Select the type of registration that applies to your work e.g. 'COVID-19' tab on the right side of the page (under 'New Registrations')
→ If you want to update a current authorized registration, please select the 'amend' button
5. Fill out the required answers and follow the step by step instructions through all sub-tabs
6. After each sub-tab click on 'save & continue' to move to the next sub-tab
7. Please provide as much information as possible
 - **Please ensure that you provide a description of the proposed work, especially if there is any potential for the propagation or amplification of the virus. We are also concerned about procedures that may generate aerosols, like high speed cell sorting, centrifugation, or any equipment that is capable of generating splash or splatter.**
 - **Make sure all research locations are listed, including any collaborating laboratories.**
 - **Include all locations where the specimens, samples, and RNA will be handled and stored.**
 - **You can upload your SOPs to your registration.**
8. Once the form is submitted to EHS for review the registration would appear in the "EHS Approval or Close Pending" list

Important note:

Yale Undergraduates or visiting undergraduates are not allowed to work on COVID-19 related research projects!

Second Step: Onsite visit from EHS

Schedule a meeting with EHS to review the proposed research space by contacting your Safety Advisor. This meeting may be a virtual (e.g. FaceTime) meeting depending on the status of the outbreak and required social distancing requirements

EHS Biosafety is scheduling a meeting with each lab working with COVID-19 specimens to review BSL-2 enhanced work practices for handling live specimens and the BSL-2 practices for handling SARS-CoV-2 RNA on the bench. Ensure that all members of the lab handling the COVID-19 specimens participate in the work practices review. This may also be in form of a virtual meeting.

EHS Biosafety is also providing labs with the following items (while supplies remain in stock):

- 1 Transport container
- 1 face shield / person (maximum 5 per lab; labs are asked to re-use them and wipe them down with 70% Ethanol)
- BSL-2 enhanced work practices handouts
- Safety equipment and supplies ordering information

Third Step: Develop site-specific SOPs

Develop a site-specific biosafety standard operating procedure (SOP) for your proposed work using the 'Biosafety Precautions with Clinical Specimens due to COVID-19' document, our BSL2 enhanced reference documents, your existing State of CT Department of Public Health human pathogen biosafety work practices protocol, or other document that provides researchers performing the work a blueprint for their own protection.

Fourth Step: Inform your colleagues

Prior to EHS approval, please confirm that you have notified everyone in your laboratory that you are initiating this work and allow them to express any of their concerns privately about any discomfort they may have regarding the proposed new work. We have identified that this has been a significant area of contention. Also discuss the routes of exposure of the virus and signs and symptoms of the disease (COVID-19).

Please also confirm that any neighboring laboratories are aware of your proposed research involving COVID-19 specimens and walk them through your safety protocols and how you have implemented safety measures to prevent them from any exposure. **This is most critical if you are sharing any equipment or lab space with other groups.**

Fifth Step: Documentation

Provide EHS with your SOPs and confirmation that all of your staff and neighboring research groups have been notified of your proposed research with COVID-19 research specimens and/or SARS-CoV-2 RNA. After receipt of these two items and following the successful start-up inspection, EHS will issue approval to initiate the research.

EHS has averaged 2 days for this process with the labs that we have worked with to date but as the number of requests increases approvals may take a bit longer.