

Use of Facemasks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Purpose: To define the use of PPE among research personnel working on UTHSC Memphis campus.

Scope: All researchers in buildings and public areas of the UTHSC Memphis Campus.

Applicability: All researchers on the UTHSC Memphis campus until notified otherwise.

Procedure:

1. All researchers on UTHSC Memphis campus must wear a facemask or other protective covering (e.g. surgical mask, N95 respirator or other cloth face covering) to conceal and contain their nose and mouth at all times while on campus.
2. Individuals with job responsibilities that OSHA considers “high risk” or “very high risk” must wear an N95 respirator while on campus. This N95 must be a model suitable for patient care and NOT equipped with an unfiltered exhalation valve. Use of an N95 respirator must be done in accordance with standard operating procedure COVID-19 SOP03 – Limited Reuse of N95 Respirators.
 - Very High Risk: Exposure to Covid19 individuals during procedures that generate droplets or aerosols (e.g. healthcare professionals, lab and mortuary staff).
 - High Risk: Exposure to Covid19 individuals without generating aerosols (e.g. healthcare support, medical transport).
3. Researchers wearing facemasks must do so in accordance with the following procedure:
 - a) Wash hands prior to handling a facemask ([please see handwashing SOP](#)).
 - b) Don the facemask before entering engaging in situations with the potential for contact within 6 feet (2 meters) of other individuals (e.g. before entering a building).
 - c) Take care not to touch the side of the mask that will contact your face.
 - d) Position the facemask so that it is comfortable and covers both the nose and mouth.

University of Tennessee Health Science Center
Research Safety Affairs Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)
COVID-19 SOP02 – Use of Facemasks and PPE

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- e) Wash your hands
 - f) Avoid touching the facemask while you are wearing it. Do not pull down beneath your nose or mouth.
 - g) Wash your hands prior to removing your facemask.
 - h) If disposable, discard your facemask as conventional trash (i.e. not regulated medical waste).
 - i) Store re-useable facemasks in a clean, breathable, labeled storage container (e.g. paper bag). Take care to ensure the inside of the facemask does not contact potentially contaminated surfaces (e.g. fold cloth masks in half).
 - j) Wash your hands after handling your facemask.
 - k) Launder cloth re-useable facemasks daily in hot water with detergent.
4. Researchers working in laboratories must wear PPE in accordance with standard precautions and instructions provided by your Principal Investigator.
- Biosafety Level 1 (BSL1): Gloves are required. A lab coat is recommended. Eye protection and a faceshield are recommended if handling more than 1L of material.
 - Biosafety Level 2 (BSL2): Gloves and a lab coat are required. Eye protection is recommended. Eye protection and a faceshield is recommended if handling more than 1L of material.
 - Handling hazardous chemicals or radioactive materials: Gloves, a lab coat and eye protection are required.
5. Researchers must remove lab coats and gloves and wash hands prior to exiting laboratories and entering common areas.
6. Researchers must not wear gloves while handling doorknobs, elevator buttons or other frequently touched surfaces in common areas. Personnel must wash or sanitize their hands after contacting frequently touched surfaces.