

Covid 19 Safety Protocol

Version: 2.3, Feb 01, 2022

The rules, regulations, policies that have been followed so far continue to be valid. All of them are available on the IITBNF website (www.iitbnf.iitb.ac.in).

Preamble:

The Covid-19 is possibly an ongoing threat - which we will have to work through to ***maintain productivity while operating safely***. This is not a new philosophy. It has existed in any lab for the longest time.

These are based on the following assumptions of **risk and related mitigation**.

Assumption: *Everyone in the lab or office is potentially infected and a carrier*. Hence, please maintain safety protocols.

Assessment of Risk vs. Response

Work & living Spaces

- **Cleanroom:** Infection cannot spread in cleanrooms as everyone is wearing PPE.
- **Non cleanroom Labs:** Infection can spread in labs but not if wearing PPE (Gloves & face mask, goggles/face-shield).
- **Office Spaces:** Infection in office spaces can spread if not wearing masks. **Wearing of masks will be mandatory in office areas.**
- For **Restrooms**, infection can spread if one does not clean hands with soap and use sanitizer, disinfectant sprays (on toilet seats) before and after restroom use.
- For **Dining Spaces & Water Fountains**, infection can spread if one does not clean hands with soap and use sanitizer before and after eating/drinking use. **Stricter social distancing (2x) must be maintained as masks cannot be used in these spaces.**
- **Closed public spaces (meeting rooms, lifts)** must be avoided or minimized. Meetings may be moved to open air spaces if necessary with social distancing.
- For **open public spaces (corridors, stairs) & outdoors**, where population is transient and occupancy is low, infection cannot spread unless through **touch with doorknobs & keypads etc.** **Spread of infection through this medium should be minimized with hand sanitizer use before and after touch or use tissues.**

- Office documents:
 - No office documents. Everything is online
 - If office documents must be used, it will need to be sanitized or kept in hold for 24 hours.
- Materials management
 - A 24 hour wait is required to assume that the package is covid free.
 - A place has to be dedicated for temporary storage of these items outside the lab and this has to be notified to all the lab members. Same should be followed for office supplies as well.
 - Those personnel accepting packages must be in face-shields, masks and gloves.

If these protocols are maintained, then we will ensure a safe working environment.

In case of infection of working lab member

In case of an infection of lab member despite safety protocol, we will perform the following

- Contact tracing as per BMC rules (taking Institute's help)
- Sanitization of office spaces is necessary only if PPE is not worn.
 - To avoid sanitization of labs by BMC, we must always wear PPE (lab-coats, gloves, face shields/goggles, masks etc.) in non-cleanroom labs as well.
 - In the place of full sanitization, we will initiate a protocol of
 - Alcohol (IPA) wipe-down of labs which is consistent with lab contamination.
 - Colins or other Lizol based wipe-down of office which is consistent with lab contamination
 - There will be no complete lab shutdown. But lab access will not be allowed till the complete cleaning procedure is done.

Guidelines

Due to the COVID 19 Pandemic, additional protocols have been laid for the safety of all lab members.

If anyone is not keeping well (running a mild temperature, has a cold, cough, diarrhea, etc.), please do not enter the labs.

1. **Lab members are allowed to work together (hostelites & non-hostelites) provided they are vaccinated at least once and complete a period of 2 weeks after vaccination or they are Covid recovered. This policy has been implemented from July 26, 2021.**
2. **Those who are not vaccinated for some special reason need to take permission from IITBNF management first, in order to use the facility. Decisions by management will be taken on a case by case basis (with Institute approval). Inside the Clean rooms, as PPE is used, permission may be granted.**
In the semi-clean labs, working together (vaccinated and no-vaxxers) is not permitted. Protocol for no-vaxxers who need to work in a semi-clean lab: Prior Intimation to the lab members must be given, so that vaccinated members will not use the lab during the same time.

3. All lab members should take utmost care while using common areas like staircases, lifts and washrooms. **Social distancing (2X) and usage of sanitizers should be STRICTLY followed along with wearing masks.**
4. It is advisable to use the lifts minimally. As the lift size is small, in order to maintain social distance, only one person should travel at a time in the lift.
5. Lab facility will be open 24X7. However, if one needs to use toxic and special gases after office hours, permission needs to be taken from the Facility Team.
6. Hand sanitizer of foot-press type is placed at all individual lab entrances.
7. Lab access cards are provided to all lab members.
8. Facilities staff members will be available 24X7, their work areas are in the service corridors and around the lab buildings as they take care of the most important supporting facilities to all the sophisticated equipment of all IITBNF labs which need continuous monitoring. They will not be entering the labs (which have fabrication/characterization equipment), until and unless it is an emergency.
9. **A declaration document is to be signed online by all lab members for [this Covid 19 Safety Protocol](#).**
10. **Submission of the google form for covid vaccination status:**
(https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1oARglBC5k34xAcCUrDn6yXtZa1YXe_b7cLD-VcPm27w/viewform?edit_requested=true)
11. **Any violation to covid 19 safety protocols will be considered under the highest category which will lead to revoking of lab access.**

Inside the labs:

12. Users should wear their own face masks (cloth based or any other type). The usual disposable face masks will be provided in the lab to all lab members, if one wishes to use them.
13. Usage of goggles, hairnet and gloves is mandatory (to minimize risk due to surface-contact based transmission).
14. Cleanroom gowns will be washed after every single use. After using the cleanroom gowns, the user should directly put it into the washing machine kept in the washing area (old chemistry room).
15. Booking of slots on tools will be controlled by the IT module to take care of social distancing. So when a particular tool is already booked by someone, slot booking module may not allow you to book a tool in its close proximity. Number of members allowed in each lab will be reduced to almost half the number that was allowed earlier, to maintain social distance.
16. All lab members will be allocated duties for cleaning of labs, taking into account the labs they will be using frequently. All lab members will also be assigned certain monitoring duties, like, clearing water from dehumidifiers, AC checking, AHU monitoring, etc. based on requirements.
17. Regarding vendors coming to the lab from outside: Lifts must not be used. Gloves and face shields are mandatory. One of the lab members has to be a buddy with the external vendor.

Epilogue

This policy has been initiated owing to the current pandemic situation.

When the Lockdown was opened during the first phase with a lot many restrictions/ rules by the Govt., our lab also was opened up on a standby mode. No research work was going on initially, but all the sophisticated critical tools that had been imported (expensive) were switched ON and put on standby mode. The supporting facilities were all turned ON to provide ambient favourable conditions for the equipment to protect them from any damage.

During the initial days, we had just a few enthusiastic staff members and senior Ph.D. students, who were residing on the campus, who took the initiative to bring up the lab on a standby mode. Also, **this team of staff members and senior students, whom we called the 'Task Force' of the lab helped in designing the COVID Safety Policy.**

This policy was collectively prepared with due diligence by the 'Task Force' under the able guidance of Prof. Udayan Ganguly keeping in mind the policies laid down by the Govt. and the Institute. This was presented to the IITBNF Faculty Oversight Committee members meeting and after a few iterations, the first version was approved on **June 26, 2020 for implementation.** **This is being updated from time to time to be in compliance with the revised guidelines by the Govt./ Institute.** The Task Force members include Bhanu Upadhyay, Ambika Shukla, Debiprasad Panda, Kulasekaran Muniappan, Pradeep Nyaupane, Sandeep Mane, Anjum Ahmed, Akshata Bhosale, Mayur Pawar, Rohidas Gaikwad, Pradnya Chabbi, Nageswari, Satyavalli.

Policy Creation & Implementation Notes

- Policy initiated by FOC on June 18, 2020
- A Task Force was formed to create the first draft - Students came up with the first cut on June 20, 2020.
- First review and implementation - June 26, 2020
- Second review and finalization - July 12, 2020
- Third review and implementation - Aug 17, 2020
- First Case of Covid - Aug 2, 2020; One of the lab members (student) tested Covid positive and he was admitted in the Institute hospital.
- Second Case of Covid - Sept 3, 2020; one of the technical staff members (who was not using the labs, and was sitting in his office) tested covid positive
- Third case of Covid - Sept 30, 2020; One of the lab staff members was tested positive.
- **The policy has been reviewed and updated about nine times over a period of one year based on the Institute's Covid safety protocol.**
- **As we have a protocol ready in place, it is easy to implement the right procedures without any delay. Also, we can contain the spread of the infection by taking the necessary precautions as given in this Covid Safety Protocol.**