Phase one reopening
guidance for Virginia Tech research
from: OVPRI

On May 15, under the direction of Gov. Ralph Northam, the Commonwealth of Virginia (with the exception of certain localities in Northern Virginia) moved into Phase One of the “Forward Virginia” plan. Virginia Tech has also entered Phase One of reopening research functions and related laboratories under the essential operations designation. The following conditions accompany Phase One:

- Employees are still encouraged to telework whenever possible. A partial return of non-essential research will be permitted with approval by the researcher’s college Dean, Institute Director, or Vice President.
  - The approver should take steps to ensure that appropriate physical distancing, use of PPE, and surface disinfection practices are followed.

- See COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures for On-Site Laboratories form for guidance on PPE requirements and to disinfection schedule documentation.

- The use of face masks is required (N95 recommended if working in close proximity to others or for long periods of time).

- The use of plastic gloves (or other type of disposable glove provided by your department) should be considered.
  - Avoid touching your face (or mask) with your gloved hands.
  - Wash and dry hands before putting fresh gloves on.
  - Replace torn gloves with a new pair.
  - After removing gloves, wash and dry hands thoroughly. If you are not near handwashing facilities, disinfect your hands with hand sanitizer, then wash hands with soap and water as soon as you can.

- Personnel should be separated by more than 6 feet at all times. Consider instituting staggered or alternative scheduling may be employed to reduce the number of laboratory personnel present at any given time.

- Gatherings larger than 10 people are prohibited.

- Laboratory managers should maintain a log to indicate the date and times for which each individual is present.

- All persons working in the laboratory should check for following before coming to work:
  - Fever (temperature >100.4°F)
  - Tiredness (fatigue)
  - Chills
  - Muscle pain
  - Cough
  - Loss of taste or smell
  - Difficulty breathing
- Headache
- Sore throat

- No person with a fever is allowed in laboratories at any time.

- Student involvement in laboratories should be limited to paid research assistants and graduate students performing work related to research required for the completion of their degrees. Research for course credit should be permitted only in exceptional circumstances as approved by the appropriate college Dean, Institute Director, or Vice President.

- Research with human subjects will be carefully considered and will require IRB approval.

- Research related travel may be permitted in some cases, but requires approval by the researcher’s college Dean, Institute Director, or Vice President. Quarantine upon return from travel is not required, but travelers should consider self-quarantine if exposed during travel to close contact with others in an area with known community spread.

- Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 must remain in isolation for at least 14 days from symptom onset or until free from fever for 72 hours, whichever is longer — or follow current public health officer's guidance. Individuals awaiting test results must remain in isolation. Individuals who have close contact with confirmed cases must remain in quarantine for 14 days.

- For questions regarding PPE or other health and safety concerns, please contact Virginia Tech’s Environmental Health and Safety office at: 540-231-3600
Updated 5/26/20

Additional details on phase one re-opening guidance for research operations for the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute from: the office of the VPHS&T and the office of the FBRI ED

Effective Tuesday May 26, 2020:
Partial return of non-essential, but important, research operations

- Each non-essential, but important, research operation must first be approved by the institute’s executive director.

- Names of persons who will be entering the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute facilities to work on these operations should be provided to the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute’s HR director in advance.

- Tele-work will still be encouraged whenever possible for those whose duties can be effectively accomplished off-site. This will be determined for each employee with their supervisor and with approval from the executive director.

- In order to enter buildings for work in FBRI/OVPHST programs, faculty, staff, and permitted students should do the following:
  - For building #2, answer an on-line symptom-based health questionnaire each day; take and report temperature each day; check in wearing a mask at the reception desk on the first floor.
  - For building #1, check in wearing a mask and complete questionnaire and temperature check at the reception desk on the ground floor.

- Non-employee/non-student visitors to the FBRI/OVPHST must first proceed to the lobby at either #1 or building #2 to answer health questions and have their temperature taken to receive a pass to enter either building.

- Non-employee/non-student visitors will be highly limited and spaced spatially and temporally to include approved research subjects (only after appropriate research protocol approval), personnel providing deliveries, security, maintenance, housekeeping, and scheduled individual guests where adequate distancing and masking are maintained and the survey/fever check is employed.

- Everyone must maintain a minimum spacing of at least six feet (10 feet is preferred) throughout the buildings, including in all common areas, labs, hallways, stairwells, conference rooms, bullpens, and restrooms.

- A face covering or mask must be worn at all times by everyone in any common area throughout the facilities. Face coverings or masks may be removed when individuals are alone in a room with a closed door, and during eating/drinking. Personal protective equipment (PPE) including masks will be provided by the research institute to each lab based on the expected number of personnel in that lab through the month of June. Beginning July 1, labs should provide their own PPE including masks for their personnel. One mask will be provided per lab personnel daily.
• When a lab research operation requires two or more individuals to work in proximity that is less than the minimum of six feet, they should each wear full PPE, including an N95 mask, a face shield, gloves, and gown.

• Only one person is allowed on an elevator at a time – if someone is already on the elevator, let it go. Only use one designated elevator. Stand back at least six feet while waiting for elevator.

• Gatherings of more than 10 people are prohibited. During gatherings, social distancing should be maintained and everyone must be wearing a face covering or mask.

• Each lab must keep a daily log of anyone who was in the lab that day. This report must indicate the names of each person, the times when they were there, and the room number(s) they entered. This is mandated for legal and health-related requirements, such as contact tracing.

• No high school students will be allowed in the FBRI facilities.

• No undergraduate students will be allowed in the FBRI facilities, except those working as paid research assistants. No undergraduates working for credit will be allowed, except under rare circumstances when their work is essential for them to complete their degree and with permission of their mentor and the executive director.

• Graduate students working on their research toward their degrees are allowed in FBRI facilities with permission of their mentor/lab PI.

• Medical students working on their official School of Medicine research project are allowed in FBRI facilities with permission of their mentor/lab PI. Each lab must have one person in authority present whenever any students are on site – it may be the principal investigator, or a designated supervisor who could be another research faculty member, a lab manager, senior technician, a research associate, a postdoctoral fellow or a senior graduate student.

• During Phase One, everyone carrying out research in labs must have approval from the lab’s principal investigator and may not be required to work in the lab if they have and express a valid reason for concern (underlying high risk medical condition, age, recent potential exposure including travel to high risk zone, possible COVID-19 symptoms, or co-habiting with someone in one of these categories).

• No work-related travel will be allowed, unless the individual has received permission from the institute’s executive director based on the travel being absolutely essential.

• Any resumption of human subjects’ research must first be approved by the SIRC in OVPRI to ensure appropriate protocols are in place to protect the safety of subjects and staff, and to assess the pandemic’s potential validity impact.

• Hand washing or use hand sanitizer is strongly recommended after handling objects or surfaces. Sanitizing high touch surfaces in hallways, labs, offices, and common spaces should be done routinely.
Meetings in Conference Rooms and Classrooms at FBRI

In person conferences or meetings should only be held when there is an important reason to do so. Virtual meetings, where possible are strongly encouraged. For necessary in-person meetings, these guidelines apply:

- Conference areas and class rooms should be reserved, and the names of attendees must be provided and logged.
- Conference and class room meetings should be limited to 60 minutes maximum.
- Conference and class rooms should not be occupied until at least 30 minutes after they have been vacated from the previous meeting.
- All participants at in-person conference and class room meetings should wear a mask during the entire meeting.
- The person reserving the conference room is responsible for sanitizing the room and surfaces upon entering and again, upon leaving the room. When sanitizing the rooms, gloves should be worn and door handles, desktops, and other high touch surfaces and equipment should be wiped down thoroughly with sanitizing wipes.
- No more than 10 people maximum in classroom R3012 at any time.
- No more than six people in conference room R1059 at any one time.
- No more than four people in conference rooms R2139 or R1083 at any time.