



COVID-19 Emergency Preparedness Animal Care FAQs

- 1. How are staff being instructed with respect to the coronavirus preparedness?**
 - a. Our emergency preparedness document is being updated and all staff will be instructed by March 11th.
 - b. Staff are expected to follow University guidelines. If they are sick or have symptoms of fever, cough, or sneezing, they are requested to self-identify, stay at home and seek medical help.
 - c. Staff returning from travel abroad are expected to self-quarantine at home for 2 weeks before returning to work.

- 2. How will Animal Care staff the vivarium in the event of a University shutdown?**
 - a. All animal husbandry and veterinary services are deemed critical and associated team members are considered as “essential employees” by the State and are therefore expected to continue to provide service to meet compliance expectations and animal welfare standards. Law enforcement will ensure that they are not stopped from reaching the facilities.
 - b. Since Coronavirus can affect all of us, in the case of a shutdown, Animal Care will default to the following options in order:
 - i. Split schedules for employees to minimize exposure to each other within the team. During this time, we will continue doing our daily work – cage wash, cage changing, cage observations, etc. There will be minimal impact to the animals.
 - ii. If a significant number of employees call in sick or are forced to stay at home due to child care issues, we will default to a weekend schedule with reduced cage changing. Supervisors and veterinary staff will step in wherever possible to maintain as close to full function as possible.
 - iii. In the event the situation gets worse and we cannot get enough staff onsite to take care of the animals, we will request volunteers from our research staff.

- 3. Will vivarium staff have access to facilities in case the University decides to restrict access?**
 - a. We are requesting the University Identity Access Management (IAM) team to make sure our essential employees will be able to access all the vivaria in case of a shutdown.

- 4. What is the status of any pending animal importation?**
 - a. Out of an abundance of caution, we are stopping all animal imports from outside the country until further notice. While it has not been demonstrated that COVID-19 can affect lab animals, they transit through cargo containers in the airports and the shipping containers could be exposed to contamination potentially resulting in fomites being brought on campus.

5. Will we run out of PPE and essential supplies?

- a. **Food and Bedding:** We have secured enough stock that is currently kept at a storage place in Somerville. The supplier has an essential supplier designation with the state and will be able to supply our facilities.
- b. **PPE:** We have worked with our current supplier to secure two months' supplies. Surgical masks and some types of N-95 respirators are currently in short supply and therefore will be available only for vivarium staff or for specialized research use only.
- c. We have direct representation with University Procurement Services task force and will work to secure supplies that are critical for our operation.

6. Which function of Animal Care will be staffed during a shutdown?

- a. Our IACUC staff, Finance team, HR team and Genome Editing Core employees are considered "non-essential" staff and will not be onsite in case of a University shutdown.
- b. IACUC staff can work remotely and will be able to process protocols and amendments. We are procuring IT equipment to ensure this capability. Protocols that require "Full Committee" deliberations may not be processed.
- c. All large gatherings or internal face-to-face meetings are being discontinued to reduce chances of exposure. Since training sessions offered to research staff by CMR bring in a large number of people to a confined space, we are suspending all training sessions until further notice.

7. Will we be able to purchase animals during a shutdown?

During a shutdown, procurement of animals will be discontinued since our services will be reduced. Research staff are requested to reconsider starting new studies at a time when they could be onsite to do their research.

8. Can Animals Care staff help with research work such as dosing, breeding, etc.?

In emergency situations, our primary efforts will be focused on keeping animals in a clean, healthy and safe environment. Staff who may be participating in dosing, breeding or similar services will be reassigned to maintaining husbandry and veterinary care services only. As a result, we request research staff to make alternate arrangements.

TABLE: Essential versus Non-essential Responsibilities

Essential		Non-essential
Critical	Important	
<u>Veterinary</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterinary emergencies • Veterinary case triage • Veterinary medical care • Euthanasia services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pharmacy inventory & supplies • Research surgeries or imaging, time-sensitive • Rodent quarantine procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentinel program • Receiving/shipping gift rodents • Regularly scheduled large animal health exams • Anesthesia machine maintenance • Research surgeries or imaging, not time sensitive • Rounds, other than clinical cases • IACUC activities including veterinary consult • Training classes or other academic non-core responsibilities • Facility orientation classes • Work-related travel
<u>Husbandry</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeding & watering all animals • Daily health observations • Sick case reporting • Spot changing soiled cages • Special water and diet provision • Unexpected deliveries or those that elude cancellation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surface sanitation • Environmental monitoring- can be monitored offsite • Regular pen washing • Regular cage changing (rodents) • Large animal enclosure or rack changing (rabbits, etc.) • Cage wash room operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Census maintenance • Animal & supply deliveries • Facility orientation sessions
<u>Administrative</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchasing food, bedding, pharmaceuticals, essential supplies • Human resources management 	<p>Most of these can be continued offsite dependent upon employee computer access</p>