



Phase 2 Return To Work Guidelines

revised June 2020

Ragon Institute

Return To Work Guidelines

An employee handbook

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Learn More About COVID-19

Ragon Connect

<https://ragonconnect.partners.org/>

Mass General

<https://www.massgeneral.org/news/coronavirus/coronavirus-latest-updates>

Outbreak.info

<https://outbreak.info/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

World Health Organization (WHO)

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Introduction

As the Ragon Institute expands its research activities in compliance with applicable governmental orders, it does so with the utmost caution and within a strict framework of operational, safety and hygiene practices. The institute's Return to Work Operations Team has been in daily consultation to develop and implement sound policies for operating during this COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to closely review and modify these policies as the situation evolves.

The overarching goal is to create and maintain an environment of enhanced safety and stringent hygiene that preserves the health of all employees while supporting important scientific research. To succeed, we need everyone to adhere to the guidelines in this Handbook. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with all of the contents.

Should there be any escalated risk at the Institute that threatens the health of our community, we will take appropriate and immediate responsive action.

The Ragon Institute's guidelines for the safe return to work of employees has **three phases**:

Phase 1: Ramp Up/Preparation Phase

- ▶ *Current Safety Guidelines remain in effect (how all essential personnel have been operating during this COVID period)*
- ▶ *Effective: May 18th*
- ▶ Labs will begin to prepare for Phase 2 by adding one additional FTE per lab (at any given hour). No experiments can be conducted during this preparation phase.

Phase 2: Governor and MGH ban lifted

- ▶ *RTW Guidelines go in effect*
- ▶ *Effective: June 1st*
- ▶ Governor and MGH ban lifted for designated non-essential personnel with a staggered daily schedule to ensure physical distancing and adherence to safety guidelines.

Phase 3: Full return to work

- ▶ *Effective: when regular operations no longer threaten the health and well-being of our workforce*
- ▶ A return to normal operations where personnel restrictions will be relaxed based on the successful containment and/or treatment of the virus.

Our highest priority with these transitions is the safety of all our employees, and to ensure that all phases are implemented safely and efficiently. The guidelines set out for Phase 2 will be reviewed on a daily basis and adjusted as needed. Adjustments will be immediately communicated to all Ragon personnel.

Most important to all phases in this transition plan is the safety of our workforce, and to achieve this we need the entire Ragon community to commit to adhering to the guidelines and to supporting this process by helping to ensure the guidelines are being followed by colleagues. All persons entering the institute must adhere to the parameters outlined below, and infractions will have to result in loss of privileges.

For those personnel who can continue to perform all of their duties at home, we encourage them to do so until we are ready for a 100% full return to the office during **Phase 3**. For all personnel who have portions of work that can be done at home, this should be conducted there until we enter **Phase 3**. Example, for lab personnel this would include any non-lab/bench work such as grant and manuscript writing.

We are in the process of setting up a Task Force whose charter will be to recommend options for supporting our community, including for employees who are serving as caregivers, facing issues with housing and transportation, and potential challenges with visas. We also have heard that in parts of the Boston area people are encountering hostility during their commute to and from work from members of the public angry about the disruption to normal life and/or the current political climate. It is best to encourage our team not to engage in any dialogue/debate and to tap into support resources at the Ragon and/or MGH.

These guidelines will take effect and remain in effect during **Phase 2** period; however, if at any time there would be a need to return to a more restrictive environment because of a change in the rates of infection or as mandated by the State or MGH requirements, additional guidance would then be provided. As we move forward, amendments of this guidance are likely. As we transition to **Phase 3** additional guidance will be provided to all staff members.

Guidelines: Phase 2

Personal protective equipment (PPE):

Hand sanitizer and Soap

- ▶ Hand sanitizer will be located throughout labs, common spaces and offices
- ▶ Soap in bathrooms and kitchen areas will be checked twice per day

Surgical Masks

- ▶ Will be distributed on the first floor in the reception area
- ▶ Must be worn at all times by all personnel and any vendors or others entering the building.
- ▶ These surgical masks need to be worn throughout the building (labs, offices, common spaces)
- ▶ Cloth masks or face coverings cannot be worn in the institute, but should be used for transport to/from the institute
- ▶ Masks may be removed in an office when nobody else is present
- ▶ Plastic mask holders will be available for personal cloth masks when people arrive at work; these cloth masks should be washed daily
- ▶ [Learn how to don and doff your surgical mask](#) and watch this [video on how to remove the surgical mask to eat.](#)

Gloves

- ▶ Usual use of gloves will continue in the labs
- ▶ Gloves must be used when operating shared equipment
- ▶ Gloves are not to be worn at other times, as the most effective way to prevent transmission is hand sanitizing.

Managing Density:

Group Leaders will be asked to develop their own plans for their labs based on density guidelines (6 foot distancing; ideally 25% density at any given time). On a weekly basis, faculty will allocate their personnel via an Excel schedule through the use of staggered shifts. Faculty will need to designate which personnel will be in the lab and/or TC rooms, who will need a desk and who will need vivarium space. Once entered into the spreadsheet, the Executive Team will review the submission and either ask follow-up questions or approve and assign desk space according to the request.

Please note: we will most likely need to convert to an MGH scheduling management database in order to track institute density. A safety monitoring team will perform spot checks throughout the day to ensure optimal implementation of this plan.

We request each PI to designate one point person from their lab to represent the lab and help support managing the density for the lab. Each PI can determine how best to stagger their lab members to ensure that the safety guidelines are followed.

Physical Distancing:

Physical contact including fist bumping and/or elbow touching is not allowed. Group Leaders and managers will be responsible for ensuring proper 6 foot physical distancing and density in the institute. Ragon Reception will have tape that can be used to ensure appropriate spacing.

Suggested ways to support physical distancing:

Lab:

- ▶ Adherence to 6 foot distancing at all times (note: an exception for walls creating physical barriers in between working spaces)
- ▶ No two people should be seated next to each other, opposite each other or back to back (note: an exception for walls creating physical barriers in between working spaces)
- ▶ Gloves should be worn when using shared equipment
- ▶ Before and after using equipment, it should be wiped and cleaned (eg: benches, handles to tissue culture room, incubators, microscopes, centrifuges, fridges, freezers, etc.)
- ▶ Keyboard for shared computers/equipment can be covered in saran wrap (available if needed) and changed with each shift, wiped down or personnel can use gloves

Office:

- ▶ No more than 2 people per office to maintain 6 foot distancing, depending on size of the office
- ▶ Signs will be posted explicitly stating the capacity of a closed in space
- ▶ If a PI designates a need for additional desk space during Phase 2, a designated hot desk will be assigned
- ▶ Individuals will be asked to wipe down hot desks after each shift

Common areas:

- ▶ Tea room, bathrooms, conference rooms and auditorium will have signs clarifying maximum capacity
- ▶ Chairs and desks will be set up to ensure 6 foot physical distancing
- ▶ Shared food/snacks in the tea room will have items that are individually wrapped
- ▶ Bathrooms will be cleaned twice a day
- ▶ Only a maximum of two people per bathroom at any time

Health Attestation/Temperature Monitoring:

Upon arrival to the building, personnel/visitors/vendors will go to reception wearing a mask and will be required to complete temperature monitoring and attest to no flu like symptoms using the [COVID-19 work pass](#) (this task may be performed at home prior to commuting to the building). The 'day working pass' must be visible on a smartphone and shown to the individual at reception along with a temperature reporting before entering the rest of the Institute or emailed to mghrhr@mgch.harvard.edu after hours, or if reception is not staffed. If you do not have a smart phone, please forward the 'day working pass' to mghrhr@mgch.harvard.edu or complete a health attestation document that will be available at reception. A surgical mask will then be distributed and must be worn while at the facility.

We hope to have temperature monitoring in place by the time Phase 2 goes live. This will be updated at that time.

Anyone with any symptoms will be requested to go home and self-quarantine and will be referred to Occupational Health Services for guidance.

The OHS call line is: **617-724-8100.**

Facilities Management and Support

Signage:

- ▶ We will increase signs all over the Ragon space reminding personnel of the guidelines including hand washing, masks and ensuring 6 feet spacing. ARE has also posted signs throughout the building to help remind people of safety measures.

Main Lobby/Lobby Elevators/Stairs:

- ▶ ARE will mark the doors for entrance into the building and exits.
- ▶ ARE will have signs in the lobby area to ensure physical distancing while waiting for the elevator. In Ragon elevator lobbies (7th, 8th and 9th) there will also be tape, please be sure to follow physical distancing protocol.
- ▶ Only one or two people (depending on size of elevator) will be allowed in an elevator at any time. People are encouraged to take stairs between Ragon floors 7, 8, 9th, hand sanitizer stations will be located at the top and bottom of stairwell for sanitizing before and after handrail use.
- ▶ The two stairwells at 400 Technology Square will be marked as 'up' or 'down'. We ask that our workforce members follow these rules.
- ▶ There are signs posted marking elevator capacity and how to enter stairwells.

Doors:

- ▶ Stairwell doors, doors to the vivarium and doors off elevator lobbies will be closed but Kleenex, sanitizer and waste baskets will be available on either side of the doors. Bathroom doors will have foot Doors to enter. Entrance to the first floor stairwells and elevators will be Id/badge accessible to help with safety.
- ▶ All personnel must have ID badges visible and no one should allow people through doors unless they are known and/or have a Ragon/MGH ID.

Cleaning:

- ▶ Full cleaning will be completed twice a day including common areas (bathrooms, offices, conference rooms, lobby areas) doors/handles, and countertops. The cleaning crew will be required to adhere to the guidelines like our Ragon personnel.
- ▶ Building air filters will be changed double the frequency.
- ▶ Personnel should clean at the end of their work day (desks, countertops, benches, telephones, keyboard, mice, etc.). Anything touched should be properly wiped down with increased attention when using shared workspace.
- ▶ American Cleaning is keeping daily logs of cleaning cycles in compliance with new guidelines set forth by the state.

Air Supply:

- ▶ ARE has increased the frequency by which they will change the air filters in the building, filters that were changed twice a year will now be done quarterly.
- ▶ 400 Technology Square, as a laboratory building, has a 100% air change to each floor anywhere from 8 to 12 times per hour, the air is not recirculated. There is always fresh air entering the space as the air flow system is never shut off, even during maintenance it is not shut off completely.

Animal Facility:

- ▶ CCM will offer specific times each day that will be open to lab staff based on occupancy guidance. CCM is currently working on a possible shift times to ensure no overlap of people working in the same workspace.

Information on Research Activities for Investigators and Research Staff:

Effective June 10, 2020, the IRB is now accepting all NEW applications. Please consult this link related to the MGB Expansion Plan:

<https://partnershealthcare.sharepoint.com/sites/phrmapply/aieipa/irb>

The IRB is continuing to accept and prioritize:

- ▶ Any research on COVID-19 or related to COVID-19
- ▶ Emergency Use requests
- ▶ Studies that have federal funding and receive Just-In-Time (JIT) notice

Please contact the IRB Help Line (IRB@partners.org) with any questions.

Recent CCM/IACUC Guidance for Animal-related Research may be found at:

- ▶ <https://mgresearch.partners.org/coronavirus-animal-research-planning-guide/>
- ▶ This includes recent updates on Phase 2 Return-to-Research FAQs (5 June 2020) and Phase 2 R-T-R Notice re Lab Spaces Used for Animal Research (11 June 2020)

The Mass General Brigham Institutional Biosafety Committee has also provided COVID-19 FAQs that may be accessed at:

- ▶ <https://partnershealthcare.sharepoint.com/sites/phrmDepartments/poc/pibc/Pages/PIBC-Policies-&-FAQs.aspx>

We will continue to update this information as new guidance comes out.

Visitors/Vendors:

Initially, no visitors will be allowed on site, and this will be reviewed over time. Contractors and vendors are allowed on site if authorized by the COO and must adhere to all safety guidelines. Maintenance of equipment will be prioritized. All contractors/vendors who are approved will need to sign a health attestation form (cleansed pens will be available) and wear a mask at all times. We will have a sign in sheet on the first floor at the reception desk. Vendors should be accompanied by Ragon personnel beyond the lobby.

Packages are received with the driver attesting delivery. No signature will be required.

Contractor/Consulting Services:

EH&E:

Our colleagues at EH&E will revert back to regular scheduled business hours.

Porter and Cleaning crew:

Franklin will continue to work his normal business hours 8:30am-5:00pm. Cleaners will come twice a day to conduct a thorough cleaning and will keep a daily cleaning log.

Meetings and Gatherings:

We ask that no in-person meetings be held but instead that personnel continue to use zoom and/or phone. If a meeting with more than two people needs to happen the request should go through the COO. If a meeting of only two people takes place, safety guidelines must be followed. We will allow space in the auditorium and tea room for individuals to take breaks. Individuals must use the chairs as set up and not move them. All chairs must be more than 6 feet apart.

For confidential phone calls, we will set up one room per floor along with signage.

Communications:

We will continue to give regular updates to all of our Ragon community via frequent zoom calls and emails. [Ragon Connect](#) will be routinely updated. Individuals will be able to find the latest information on guidelines and any new updates.

As a reminder, we have support services for you. Here is some important contact information:

- ▶ MGH Anonymous Compliance Hotline: 617-726-1446
- ▶ MGH Occupational Health: 617-726-2217
- ▶ Partners Compliance Help Line: 1-800-856-1983
- ▶ Corrie Martin, Ragon COO: 857-268-7074
- ▶ Delita Goodridge, Administrative Manager: 857-268-7078
- ▶ Jeff Hickey, MGH HR Manager: 617-643-2857
- ▶ Jenn Allen, Sr. HR Business Partner: 617-724-4828

Transportation:

Group Leaders should discuss options for safe commuting to/from work with their lab members.

- ▶ Masks should be used as per community regulations
- ▶ We encourage walking and biking to work where and if possible
- ▶ If commuting by MBTA masks should be worn at all times and judgement should be used to ensure distancing as much as possible
- ▶ Staggered 'shifts' should be used to limit commuting during rush hours
- ▶ The MGH Shuttles will still be active and a possible commute option depending on where you are coming from
- ▶ The Return To Work Task Force will be sharing information on resources available to our Ragon community

Safety Monitoring & Disciplinary Action:

Safety monitoring:

- ▶ A safety monitoring team will spot check throughout the day to ensure that safety guidelines are followed. This team will regularly report to the COO who will keep the faculty and executive team apprised of any issues or concerns.

Disciplinary action:

- ▶ Disciplinary action will be taken based on the **three strike system**. Should any employee/visitor or vendor not follow the guidelines, they will be given a warning. If it happens a second time, the COO will speak with the PI and/or manager who will address this directly with the individual. If it happens a third time, the employee will be asked to not come to the office to work but instead work from home. The safety of our people is the priority and should anyone put others in danger there will be consequences.

Testing:

At the current time testing is only available through your primary care physician or through Occupational Health. Due to HIPAA regulations we do not anticipate any testing being required. If this changes, we will update you by email.

Our top priority is the health and well-being of all Ragon Institute staff and personnel. We are working hard to ensure a smooth and safe transition back to work. Your cooperation and feedback have been critical in the planning process and we appreciate all your efforts.

BE SMART. BE SAFE.

