



## **Logistics and Guidelines FAQ**

### **How do I prepare for my first day back onsite?**

You should be in touch with your manager/PI about your schedule before you return onsite and read the Phase 2 guidelines. Before coming onsite, fill out the one-time health attestation.

### **What do I do once I'm back onsite?**

You must wear a mask, work only during your assigned onsite hours, and fill out a Daily COVID Pass. The COVID pass must be forwarded every day to [mghrhr@mg.harvard.edu](mailto:mghrhr@mg.harvard.edu).

### **How does the scheduled onsite time work?**

The Ragon is moving to an assigned onsite work time model. In this, you and your manager/PI determine your schedule for each week, and the Operations team approves it before the week begins. Your onsite time may stay consistent from week to week, or it may change, depending on your needs and your lab's needs. Some labs have chosen to move to shifts to best suit their needs. In that case, you would talk to your PI/manager to determine your assigned shift time.

### **How do I handle this transition if I need flexibility?**

We are working with our PIs/managers so they can provide flexibility when needed. It's important that you let your PI/manager know beforehand when you may need flexibility in your schedule, if at all possible. Our Operations team is also available for help, as we anticipate new and unusual challenges that may require additional support after the initial conversation with your PI/manager.

### **What are the social distancing requirements?**

You are required to wear a mask, practice good hand hygiene, and maintain 6 feet distancing whenever possible. We recognize that some procedures or trainings in lab may not be compatible with 6-foot distancing, and in those cases, you need to speak to your PI/manager *before* the day of the protocol or training to determine the safest way to proceed.

### **Do I have to wear a mask at all times?**

You have to wear a mask any time you're in a public area, such as a hallway, or in a room with another person. If you are eating or drinking, you may remove your mask, but make sure you are more than 6 feet from your nearest neighbor.

### **What if I see someone not following the new guidelines?**

If you see something, say something. A simple request in a friendly tone of voice, such as, “Hey, do you mind pulling your mask back up?” will often be enough. Please don’t think of it as a confrontation; instead, remember that everyone is adjusting to a new normal and we all need reminders as we learn a new routine. If you do not feel comfortable saying anything, or if you have asked and someone has refused to comply, please contact Claire and Thor, our COVID-19 Safety Officers.

### **I woke up feeling ill. What do I do?**

Contact your manager/PI and let them know you will not be coming in that day. Then, call MGH Occupational Health at (617) 726-2217 for a confidential consultation. They will help you determine if you need a COVID-19 test and where to get one if needed. Even if your symptoms do not match those of COVID-19, **do not come in if you are feeling ill.**

### **Where is testing offered?**

Testing can be arranged through MGH Occupational Health if you meet their criteria.

### **I tested positive for COVID-19. What now?**

Regardless of where you received your test, you will need to consult with MGH Occupational Health on your next steps. You will also need to contact your manager/PI, and our COO, Corrie Martin. Corrie will work with OccHealth so that they can conduct contact tracing at the Ragon.

### **If I test positive, will people know?**

Your manager/PI, Corrie Martin, and MGH OccHealth will do everything possible to protect your privacy. However, it is possible that your coworkers may guess through contact tracing or your period of self-quarantining. We ask that people refrain from speculating on why people are not at the Ragon or, if they are contacted as part of the contact tracing process, who they came into contact with.

### **What if I’m exposed to a colleague who tested positive for COVID-19?**

If an exposure happens, you will be contacted by MGH Occupational Health for a consultation on next steps. MGH’s contact tracing guidelines define exposure as standing within six feet of someone, without a mask on, for at least 10 minutes. The Phase 2 guidelines should prevent anyone from being exposed while at the Ragon; however, contact tracing will be done in each and every case of someone at the Ragon testing positive.

### **Will we be notified if someone at the Ragon tests positive?**

Yes, the Institute will send out an email in each case of a positive test. In both cases when we have had a positive test previously (as of 7/6/2020), we have sent an email to notify everyone

onsite; in Phase 2 we will send notifications via email to the entire Ragon. If we see a spike or cluster of cases, the entire Institute will be notified that such an event has happened.

### **Why are we going through MGH Occupational Health, instead of developing our own guidelines and procedures?**

MGH's procedures and guidelines are developed with their world-class epidemiologists and public health experts and are constantly being re-evaluated and updated as new information is made available. We greatly benefit from access to this incredible resource. Our workforce is safer if we use the expertise available to us through MGH.

### **What if I'm scheduled to leave but something comes up and I have to stay onsite?**

Immediately get in contact with your PI/COO and let them know. They will help manage any needed schedule changes to keep their lab at the appropriate density level. Though not all delays can be anticipated, scheduling your onsite work with extra time can help lower occurrences of needing to stay onsite longer than planned.

### **What if I'm onsite and finish my work early?**

You can absolutely leave early. Let your PI/manager know that you finished earlier than anticipated and then leave.

### **How do I navigate going to the bathroom under the new guidelines?**

Only two people are allowed in the bathroom at any given time. To check how many people are in the bathroom, you may either use the provided hand sanitizer and knock loudly, or you can walk in briefly and leave if there are already two people in the bathroom. We do not want people congregating or waiting in the bathroom, but a brief check is fine. Remember that both bathrooms on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor are unisex.

### **Where am I supposed to find desk space?**

All of our conference rooms, the auditorium, and some of the office spaces have been converted into hot desk office spaces available for use, with capacity limits clearly posted. You may use any available room for desk space, including the first floor and rooms on a different floor from your normal workspace. If you need to reserve a room, please contact Claire, [cebrewer@mg.harvard.edu](mailto:cebrewer@mg.harvard.edu), who can grant you access to the Skedda reservation system.

Whenever possible, try to arrange your schedule so that you can do the majority of your desk work at home.

## **I'm worried about eating and drinking, since I have to take my mask off. How do I eat safely?**

The tea room has a new physically distanced setup to help people eat lunch at least 6 feet apart, and people's varied schedules have decreased the number of people eating lunch onsite from 12-1 pm. You may also eat in a conference room or office, or consider eating a bit earlier or later if you find the tea room at capacity during your standard meal times. When the weather is nice, we strongly encourage you to consider an outdoor eating space, like our beautiful lawn.

## **How does social distancing work with shared equipment?**

For any shared equipment, you'll want to talk to your PI/manager. They should coordinate with other labs who are sharing equipment to help keep you socially distanced. Consider measures like a physical or virtual sign-up sheet, marking 6 foot distances on the floor, or coordinating with other frequent users.

## **How do I safely navigate coming in and out of the building?**

ARE has clearly marked all doors as unidirectional entrances or exits. If there is a large number of people entering or exiting, you may wait out of the way until they have moved. If this is a consistent issue, consider discussing coming in 5-10 minutes earlier or later with your PI.

## **How do I safely navigate through hallways, stairwells, etc...?**

The closed stairwells are now unidirectional, so you should not pass anyone on them. On the central, open stairwell, please check for people before entering the stairwell. You can help minimize potential contact in the hallways by looking down a hallway before entering it, stepping aside into an empty or under-capacity open room if you see a large number of people coming, and always wearing a mask. Do not stop to talk to people in the hallways; move to an open common area, where you will not block traffic. While reduced density is important, briefly passing someone in the hallway while wearing a mask and observing good hand hygiene should not put anybody at risk.

## **What is being done to keep surfaces clean?**

High-traffic surfaces are being regularly cleaned by the housekeeping staff and there are Clorox wipes provided in all common areas and available upon request. Inside the labs, common machines, keyboards, etc.. should be clearly labelled as "Gloves Only." If you are using something that is not labeled as Gloves Only but should be, either because it is a shared machine or others have touched it with gloves on, please either label it yourself or bring it to Thor and Claire's attention so they can label it. This practice should be followed regardless of which Phase the Ragon is in.

## **Where I can find information on logistical support, such as transportation and childcare?**

The Return to Work Taskforce is working with leadership to provide additional resources, including clearly communicating MGH resources, during these challenging times. Updates are posted on [RagonConnect](#) and communicated through email.

## **I'm not a pessimist – or at least don't mean to be - but can these policies really be successful?**

Yes, they absolutely can be successful! Most people are understandably nervous as they make the transition back to the Ragon. But MGH's strictly enforced adherence to masking and social distancing has been incredibly effective at preventing workplace transmission in an extremely high-risk environment. Our guidelines are based on MGH's protocols because we believe, with excellent evidence, that they have been and will continue to be successful.

These guidelines bring many changes to the Ragon, some of which are certain to be frustrating. We have to put thought and care into our daily routines, such as work, meals, and transit, that we did not before. There is a greater need for collaboration and discussion than ever before, on everything from previously minor details to Institute-wide challenges. But with patience, care, and understanding, we can work together to find a new way to do science during this global pandemic.

Through this entire process, we will continue to constantly evaluate how the guidelines work, both in terms of safety and in terms of challenges specific to our Institute. We welcome and encourage your feedback as we navigate this process.

## **Phase 2 Contacts**

Ragon Institute COVID Safety Officers

Claire Brewer: [cebrewer@mgh.harvard.edu](mailto:cebrewer@mgh.harvard.edu)

Thor Sandstad, [tsandstad1@mgh.harvard.edu](mailto:tsandstad1@mgh.harvard.edu)

MGH Occupational Health

Monday – Friday, 7:30 am to 5:00 pm: 617-726-2217

Off-hours: 617-726-2000; ask for the Occupational Health On-Call Nurse Practitioner

Ragon Institute Leadership

Bruce Walker, Director: [bwalker@mgh.harvard.edu](mailto:bwalker@mgh.harvard.edu)

Facundo Batista, Assistant Director: [fbatista1@mgh.harvard.edu](mailto:fbatista1@mgh.harvard.edu)

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