To be prepared for the possibility of your research group and facilities experiencing disruption – for example if an individual or group of employees are unable to come to work – please use the guidance below to develop a plan for continuing your research.

For more specific information and direction, please contact your Associate Dean for Research. For VPR Centers, please contact vpr@iastate.edu or your AVPR liaison or VPR Nusser.

**Getting Started**

- Update your research group or lab member contact list (e.g., name, title; ISU location, office phone, email; and cell phone number). Share the list with each lab member and with your supervisor and/or department chair as well as the building manager (if applicable). Keep both hard copies as well as electronic versions of the list.
- Make sure that there are additional backups for Emergency contact information for your laboratory.
- If unable to come to work, please ensure that your University phone calls are forwarded automatically to appropriate alternative phone numbers.

**Considerations for Research Operations Contingency Planning**

In considering potential disruptions, please think about the following areas below.

*Critical Personnel*

- Who are the key people (staff, students, faculty) whose positions or knowledge deem them critical to operations? Resist the temptation to identify all lab staff as critical. The staff you identify should be those you would call upon first in time of crisis -- who have the experience, skills, or authority to perform critical essential tasks and/or make decisions.
- Who are the most important people from elsewhere on campus? (e.g, Dept Chair, Associate Dean for Research)
- Do all critical personnel have access to enter the building/laboratories if needed, e.g., in the case of a disruption in university activities?
- Who are the key external partners and vendors that your staff rely on? Who are the other stakeholders that your staff may need to contact during and after the pandemic period? (e.g., project partners, collaborators at other universities, donors, or sponsors)
Vital Tasks
• Which tasks must be performed by a staff skeleton crew to sustain only the most important essential functions?
• Which unique specimens, research materials, and projects are important and also require staff maintenance?
• What task modifications may be necessary under pandemic conditions? Consider possible health, safety, and security aspects.
• How can the duration of important lab tasks be minimized?

Vital Equipment
• Which equipment are vital to maintaining the essential functions of your lab? Examples:
  o NMR/MRI/other magnets requiring cryogens
  o GC/MS, PET, EM, irradiators
  o Glove Boxes
  o Solvent Purification Systems
  o Incubators
  o Refrigerators/Freezers
  o -80 Freezer(s)
• What does the equipment require at what frequency (daily, weekly) for human operation, maintenance, and troubleshooting?
• What mitigation activities could protect vital equipment?
• Ensure Emergency equipment is accessible and workable (e.g., defibrillators)

Vital Research Material
• Of the supplies needed to conduct your research, which are vital to your operations?
• Which supplies are most important and potentially limited? Should additional stocks be ordered?
• Which personal protective equipment (PPE) is required for essential functions?
• Which PPE may be subject to shortages (e.g., gloves) in the current pandemic? What is the best approach to conserving limited supplies while adequately protecting staff?
• What would you do if timely delivery is interrupted? What duration of interruption would cause irreparable damage to your research?
• Does your laboratory need to have duplicate samples of novel compounds, specimens, etc. to continue research? Examples:
  o Samples and specimens (live, fresh, frozen, and fixed)
  o Novel compounds and biochemicals
  o Type specimens
  o Cell lines
  o Seeds
- Plants
- Animals
- Specialized reagents and chemicals

*Communication and Collaboration*
- How will your staff communicate with each other and provide regular updates?
- Do staff have the necessary equipment, knowledge, and skills to work remotely? Are documents and reference materials available to facilitate remote collaboration?
- Which special IT security and privacy requirements or licenses to specific software need consideration?
- How can reliance on key people be mitigated temporarily during the pandemic? (e.g., cross-training, written instructions or notes)
- What should be communicated when and to whom about the potential for and impacts of disruption?
- Consider the implications if another university or facility experiences a closure.
- Consider materials transfer agreements (MTA) and external research collaborators.
- Consider contacting research partners and sponsors that may not have specific guidance for interruptions (e.g., industry) regarding project plans and timelines.