To all Institutes and facilities of the der Max-Planck-Gesellschaft

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Framework for Action “Occupational Health and Safety from A to Z during the Pandemic”

The following recommendations are based on the occupational health and safety standards of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs dated 16 April 2020, which – at any rate from a factual point of view – are to be classified as binding. (https://www.bmas.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2020/einheitlicher-arbeitsschutz-gegen-coronavirus.html).

This framework for action is intended to be an urgent recommendation for implementation put in concrete terms for the interests and concerns of the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft. Farther-reaching compulsory regulations – particularly under state legislation – must be taken into account in addition. The general principle of occupational health, which requires that technical measures be taken first and personal protection measures only be adopted if the former are impossible, applies without limitation.

Access

Access to the Institute is only permitted for → Institute staff. Exceptions for visitors and external companies are only permitted in justified individual cases (→ External companies, → Visitors, → Probands) if registration by name is ensured.

Animal facilities

For the staff members working at the animal facilities, the additional requirements communicated to this group of individuals by the Animal Welfare Officer in the MPG are applicable. The organizational and temporal separation of working groups remains unchanged until revoked.

The simultaneous use of airlocks and sit-overs by several individuals is not permitted. Distances are to be maintained by suitable access regulations or floor markings. The same applies to showers and hand washbasins in the airlock zones.
Working equipment at animal facilities should be used in a personalized manner as far as possible. If this is not possible, work equipment should be regularly cleaned and disinfected before being handed over to others.

**Business Travel (updated June 24, 2020)**

Domestic business travel is permitted if it is all about appointments requiring personal presence, which cannot be postponed.

For official trips abroad, a statement by the MPG’s central Crisis Unit must be obtained before starting to travel. This regulation applies until further notice. This also applies to travel within Europe, since despite the lifting of many travel restrictions in some countries, there is an increased risk of infection and quarantine requirements. There may also continue to be travel restrictions for employees who are not EU nationals.

The statement is to be requested by sending an informal notification to krisenstab@gv.mpg.de, stating the following details:

- Expected date of arrival and departure;
- Number of travellers;
- Country of destination and region/places in the host country, as well as indication of the transit countries, if applicable;
- Means of transport used for the official trip and during the stay in the host country;
- Reason why the official trip cannot be taken at a later date.

Business errands as well as journeys made for transport and supply purposes are permitted in compliance with the protective measures (→ Vehicles).

**Canteens**

Canteens may be opened on the following conditions:

- No waiting queues where the meals are distributed and the trays are returned;
- Food must be handed over in portions on trays. No self-service for unpackaged foodstuffs (“salad bar”, beverages and the like);
- Canteen staff and cashiers are protected from the canteen users by transparent partitions;
- The use of the canteen may be facilitated for registered visitors;
- Cashless payments are to be preferred; if this is not possible, cash must be exchanged in a contactless manner (e.g. by means of a money bowl).

**Catering (updated June 24, 2020)**

The catering of events must be carried out in compliance with infection protection (no self-service, compliance with hygiene measures). If necessary, drinks and crockery can be provided to each participant at the venue. Bottles, coffee pots etc. may not be used by more than one person.
Changing rooms

In the changing rooms, the minimum distance is to be maintained at any time. An overcrowding of these rooms is to be avoided by phased clothes change times.

Hand disinfection is required after entering and before leaving the changing rooms. Hand disinfectants are to be made available.

Children

→ Parent-child office

Clean rooms

The simultaneous use of airlocks and sit-overs by several individuals is not permitted. Distances are to be ensured by suitable access regulations or floor markings. The same applies to showers and hand washbasins in the airlock zones.

The use of suitable authorized protective clothing continues to be compulsory. Mouth and nose coverings from textiles are not permitted.

Events

Public events are not permitted until further notice.

Meetings, discussions and the like may be held on the following conditions:

- The participants can maintain the minimum distance of 1.5 m among each other at any time by means of suitable seating;
- The number of participants is to be limited to the necessary level; participation via video conference is to be preferred.
- All participants must leave the room at least once per hour for five minutes to enable the room to be ventilated;
- As far as colloquia or seminars are concerned, a minimum distance of three meters or a transparent partition between the speakers and the audience must be ensured;
- No distribution of handouts or other documents;
- Visitors may only participate with the agreement of the Institute Management. In this case, the names and contact data of the visitors must be registered.

External companies (updated June 24, 2020)

Employees of external companies may only enter the Institute or place of employment if this has been arranged for/commissioned by the Institute. Employees of external companies must bring along the required mouth and nose protection themselves.

Registration by name is required for all external individuals in order to be able to identify and inform contact persons if necessary. Compliance with the safety and protective measures as well as confirmation that there are no symptoms of illness and no entry from a risk area according to the list of the Robert-Koch-Institute
First aid and first aiders (updated June 24, 2020)

As a rule, it is not possible to provide first aid while maintaining the minimum distance. Therefore, personal protective equipment (FFP2/FFP3 masks) should be provided. The provision of instructions and occupational medical precautions are dispensable, assuming that the wearing time of a mask is short (time until the person receiving first aid is definitely taken care of by an emergency physician).

In cases of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (rescue breathing + heart massage), rescue breathing may be waived if necessary, taking into account the first aider’s infection risk and self-protection, because an effective heart massage is in the foreground. (See also the opinion of the German Resuscitation Council: [https://www.grc-org.de/projekte/21-2-COVID-19](https://www.grc-org.de/projekte/21-2-COVID-19))

Guest houses (updated June 24, 2020)

The use of the guest houses by the tenants is possible. When receiving visitors (number of persons, registration if necessary) the regulations of the respective federal state must be observed.

Shared facilities (e.g. kitchen, common rooms) may only be used by residents if the minimum distance between persons is maintained or a mouth-and-nose protection is worn.

General information

The requirement to keep a distance of 1.5 metres from other persons and consistent adherence to the hygiene rules are applicable to all activities without limitation.

The specified time limits may be adjusted depending on how the situation evolves.

Home office

As the infection situation changes, adjustments in one direction or another are required. Operational concerns are to be constantly weighed against infection protection, taking account of local and organizational conditions. The general rule for the months of June and July is that physical presence at the workplace should be cautiously increased. Now, the next step is to continue to permit working from home generously while intensifying again the on-site activities at the Institutes.

The prerequisite for this are the standards regarding occupational safety and those relating to the → workplace, → laboratories, → workshops, → libraries.

Individuals at risk

The risk of serious illness steadily increases from the age of 50 onwards. Owing to the fact that the immune system of individuals aged 50 and more is less responsive, they may fall more seriously ill after an infection.
Regardless of age, however, various underlying diseases, such as for example cardiovascular
diseases, diabetes, diseases of the respiratory system, diseases of the liver and kidneys as well as
cancerous diseases seem to increase the risk of a severe course of disease for those affected.
Therefore, the measures for reducing contacts and ensuring hand hygiene are particularly important
for this group of individuals and must be considered to a particular degree in their work
arrangements.

**Individuals with severe disabilities**
The special requirements of health protection and safety for individuals with severe disabilities and
persons treated as such are to be observed. The protection measures are to be established jointly
with the individuals with severe disabilities.

**Institute staff**
Institute staff have permission to enter the Institute/facility without registration by name. The following
persons are part of the Institute staff:

- Employees, i.e.: employees subject to the Collective Wage Agreement for the Civil Service
  (TVöD), employees with contracts similar to those for Civil Servants, doctoral students with a
doctoral student funding contract, student assistants and individuals who are marginally
employed for the short term;
- Trainees;
- Scholarship holders with an MPG Scholarship Award Letter;
- Guests with a Guest Residency and Use of Facilities Agreement.

**Instructions**
Instructions to Institute staff are to be provided preferably by means of online offerings and other
digital means.
As for events at which personal attendance is compulsory, the conditions defined under → Events
apply.

**Laboratories**
Staying at laboratories is permitted if the distance rules are observed. Workplaces and apparatuses
are to be set up in a personalized way as far as possible and to be marked accordingly.

**Libraries**
The libraries remain closed for visitors until further notice. 
Institute staff have permission to use libraries and reading rooms under the following restrictions:

- Prior to entering the library: hand washing (soap + water, at least 30 seconds) or disinfecting;
- No displaying of daily newspapers, writing material, flyers etc.;
- The bringing along of own documents and working tools is to be reduced to the necessary
  minimum;
The distance rules must be observed constantly;
Reduction of the seating to ensure a seat spacing of at least 1.5 metres to other users towards all sides
After leaving the library: hand washing (soap + water, at least 30 seconds)

Maternity protection
The Maternity Protection Act contains special regulations for the protection of mother and child. In respect of health protection, it has priority over all other regulations otherwise applicable within the framework of employment, during studies or training. This applies particularly in the context of activities exercised during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To the extent that it is defensible according to the provisions of the Maternity Protection Act, the mother is to be given the possibility of pursuing her activities even during pregnancy, after childbirth and during the breastfeeding period. In this context, the working conditions are to be shaped to the extent that hazards having a sufficient bearing on both the professional activity and on pregnancy or the breastfeeding period should be avoided as far as possible. The aim is to exclude what is referred to as an indefensible endangerment of the mother or the child. The notes of the Federal Office of Family Affairs and Civil Society Functions regarding the evaluation of the hazards caused by SARS-CoV-2 under the Maternity Protection Act (https://www.bafza.de/fileadmin/Rat_und_Hilfe/Ausschuss-fuer-Mutterschutz/Informationspapier_Mutterschutz_und_SARS-CoV-2_200414.pdf) are to be observed.

Mouth and nose covering
Mouth and nose coverings are textile aids to be reused several times, which serve the protection of others and offer no specific product quality. These coverings are sufficient for workplaces without special protection requirements and in public spaces.

Institute staff may use their own mouth and nose coverings at the Institute/place of employment. Care must be taken to ensure their hygienic cleaning, e.g. using water (at least 60°C), covering with hot water or ironing (at least 60°C, without steam).

During breaks from wearing, mouth and nose coverings must not be placed on working surfaces, and their allocation to a specific person has to be possible unambiguously, e.g. by means of marking.

Mouth and nose protector
Medical mouth and nose protectors (surgical masks) primarily serve the protection of others and shields the latter against possibly infectious droplets from the person wearing the mouth protector.

Working areas in which a mouth and nose protector must be worn for reasons of environmental hygiene should preferably continue to use these disposable products. Multiple use is only possible if the Institute/facility defines the type of treatment and implements it itself.

During breaks from wearing, mouth and nose protectors must not be placed on working surfaces, and their allocation to a specific person has to be possible unambiguously, e.g. by means of marking.
**Occupational medical precautions**

Coordination between the Institutes and facilities and their respective in-house physicians regarding the current course of action and prevention counselling (e.g. accident at work, risk of infection, special skin strains, psychosocial stress) has to be ensured individually. As far as compulsory medical health provision and potentially required fitness tests are concerned, medical examinations requiring the physician's presence (e.g. protective vaccinations) can be carried out in compliance with the protective measures (hygiene, distance, protective equipment).

Otherwise, it may be sufficient to benefit to the maximum extent from the deadlines permitted until the next examination, especially as far as the offer of preventive medical care is concerned, and – in light of the current situation – to limit these services to the important components of anamnesis and the provision of advice over the telephone.

Occupational health counselling, preventive care and examinations in the area of radiation protection are to be carried out in such a way that the presence of the Institute employee is reduced to the indispensable minimum.

**Parent-child office (updated June 24, 2020)**

The use of the parent-child office is prohibited until July 31, 2020. It is not permitted to bring along children to the Institute or place of employment.

**Personal protective equipment**

Only half- and full-face masks (FFP masks or full face respiratory masks with spin-on filters) are personal protective equipment with defined filtering effects. Exclusively authorized products with a defined protection effect may continue to be used for these applications. The offer of occupational health examinations in respect of the use of respiratory masks must be guaranteed.

**Pregnant women**

According to the findings made so far, pregnant women are not at increased risk of a severe course of disease. In the interest of general risk minimization, the possibility of working from the home office is to continue to be granted to pregnant women on a preferred basis.

**Probands**

Activities with probands/test persons may be carried out provided that hygiene rules are observed, in particular:

- Registration of the contact data;
- The test persons are provided with disposable mouth and nose protectors;
- Contacts with Institute staff are to be limited to the necessary minimum;
- If the minimum distance cannot be maintained, all those involved must wear mouth and nose protectors or respiratory masks;
- No direct physical or spatial contact among test persons;
- After each experiment/test: cleaning and, if necessary, disinfection of the surfaces/apparatuses touched by test persons.
Recreation rooms

Recreation rooms may only be used for work breaks and food intake if this is not permitted or not acceptable at the workplace. Care must be taken to ensure that the minimum distances are maintained by all individuals.

- Prior to entering and after leaving the recreation rooms: hand washing (soap + water, at least 30 seconds) or disinfecting;
- The storage of open and perishable foodstuffs and beverages is not permitted. Storage in refrigerators must be personalized, using marked and closed receptacles;
- Dirty crockery / cutlery must not be left around but has to be washed or put into the dishwasher immediately.

Respiratory masks

→ Personal protective equipment

Sport (updated June 24, 2020)

The use of spaces, devices and equipment for sportive activities at the Institutes is prohibited until July 31, 2020. Sports facilities and outdoor sports activities are permitted if the minimum distances between people can be maintained.

Surfaces

Handrails in generally accessible walkways as well as door handles of working, social and sanitary rooms are to be cleaned at least once per working day.

Trainees

Trainees with upcoming final and intermediate examinations (if they take place at all) have permission to return to their training places also for the purpose of exam preparation. Practical activities in laboratories, animal facilities, workshops etc., which are required in this context, are to be limited to the necessary level.

The health and safety regulations for employees are applicable to trainees whenever there are no special regulations for them (e.g. Youth Employment Protection Act).

Vehicles

In case of journeys required for operational purposes, the simultaneous use of vehicles by several individuals is to be avoided. If the minimum distance between the vehicle occupants cannot be maintained, the latter have to wear mouth and nose coverings.

Company vehicles are to be equipped with utensils for hand hygiene and disinfection as well as with garbage bags. They are to be cleaned, particularly after having been used by several persons. For routine journeys taking place daily (e.g. animal transports / material delivery between animal facilities), individual drivers or teams should always use the same company vehicle if possible.
Visitors (updated June 24, 2020)

Visitors may only enter the Institute/facility with the agreement of the Management. They are to be welcomed and sent off at the entrance/gate.

Registration by name is indispensable in order to be able to identify and inform contact persons if applicable. Compliance with the safety and protective measures as well as confirmation that there are no symptoms of illness and no entry from a risk area according to the list of the Robert-Koch-Institute (https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/Risikogebiete_neu.html) within 14 days preceding their visit must be documented using the “Access by visitors/external companies” document (https://max.mpg.de/News/Documents/Corona_instructions%20external%20visitors.docx).

Workplace

Working rooms are to be occupied preferably by one person only. If this is not possible, the required minimum distance of 1.5 metres must be ensured and, if necessary, further measures, such as for example regular airing or transparent partitions between workplaces, must be taken.

The possibilities of separating Institute staff spatially, e.g. by using available single offices, should be availed of.

Workshops

The operation of workshops is permitted if the distance rules are observed. Devices and tools are to be used in a personalized manner as far as possible.

Other Institute staff are not to enter the workshops. Work orders are provided and handed over preferably in a contactless manner at the time of acceptance or collection.