

DATE: October 30, 2020
TO: Faculty and Users of the PRISM Cleanroom
FROM: Craig B. Arnold, PRISM Director
SUBJECT: New Daytime Operational Safety Policy (M-F 9am – 4 pm) – No Buddy Required

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The PRISM Cleanroom will be instituting a new operational policy. **As of Monday November 2, 2020, Labmembers will no longer be required to use the Buddy System during the normal business hours of Monday-Friday 9am-4pm.** Outside of these hours, or in the case where Cleanroom staff are not available due to absence, the Buddy System will remain in effect.

COVID-mandated occupancy limits in the PRISM Cleanroom during the initial phases of re-opening placed tremendous burden on researchers who were unable to perform work without onerous planning with colleagues to adhere to the University's never-work-alone guidelines. This situation was made even more difficult when dealing with wet bench processes containing hazardous chemicals as those cases require the presence of an 'in-person' buddy. To strengthen our overall commitment to safety for all Labmembers, the Cleanroom management has reallocated the hours of Staff members to ensure that **during normal daytime hours, at least one Staff member will always be available in the facility as a Safety Liaison such that no researcher should be concerned about working alone.**

Safety is a community responsibility and we all need to take it seriously. Anyone who enters the PRISM Cleanroom does so acknowledging that ultimately each person is responsible for their own safety, having been informed of dangers, best practices, and policies. In addition, each person has an obligation to assist others in times of emergency to the best of their abilities. Orientation training includes how to contact Staff, escort someone to the safety shower or eyewash, or to call the Department of Public Safety in times of need. Thus, any researcher working in the Cleanroom should consider themselves a part of the safety apparatus of the lab.

However, in order to ensure that Labmembers are supported for the most hazardous processes **it will now be required that upon entering the Cleanroom, researchers who plan on performing activities involving hoods and wet benches inform the Staff Safety Liaison, whose name will be posted on NEMO.** This simple step will ensure that appropriate communication and support for the Labmember is in place so they can safely complete their work. In the future, we will be implementing adjustments to make the notification step simpler for the Labmember once they sign into the facility. But until those features are in place, verbal notification/confirmation should be given. This policy does not require that the Staff Safety Liaison be present at the location where hazardous work is being conducted, but merely that he or she is aware that such work is taking place and uses his/her discretion in managing the specific situation safely for all Labmembers.

We acknowledge that during these days of COVID, there are many barriers to getting research done. We appreciate your patience in dealing with these challenges, and the Cleanroom Staff stands ready to support our Labmembers in any way we can to promote and ensure a safe and productive experience within our facilities.