

Handling Human Materials during COVID-19 Pandemic

Frequently Asked Questions

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, certain human materials that have not been tested for the presence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus may pose a risk to research staff and the community. This risk can be prevented while working with these human materials by following Universal Precautions and implementing additional practices.

Recommended Additional Practices:

- *Blue pads for open bench work*
- *Face shield for open bench work*
- *Increase cleaning before and after bench work*

Are human materials at risk for the presence of Sars CoV2?

Currently, human materials collected January 2020 and forward may have the potential to contain Sars CoV2; blood, saliva, and possibly feces.

Is using Universal Precautions sufficient for handling human materials

Universal precautions may not be wholly sufficient for mitigating the risk for exposure to Sars CoV2. The primary route of transmission is person to person via aerosol droplets, surface transmission and there is some evidence of fecal transmission. Universal precautions is **not** used to address aerosol routes of transmission. Additional practices are warranted to ensure risk from potential aerosol exposure is prevented during laboratory manipulation of these materials.

Is special training needed in addition to Blood borne Pathogen (BBP) training?

All employees on-site are required to take [COVID 19: Working Safely in U-M Research Areas](#). Users must be informed about the routes of transmission for Sars CoV2 to facilitate the understanding and implementation of the additional practices employed to prevent inadvertent laboratory exposure to Sars CoV2. This information can be provided by the lab director or manager.

Is special equipment required for handling human materials now?

No. There is no requirement for special equipment to handle human materials.

It is recommended that open bench manipulation of human materials now include the use of a face shield to provide additional protection for the face and mucous membranes from potential aerosols that may be generated. BSL2 containment requires aerosol generating procedures be conducted in a class II biosafety cabinet (if possible).

SARS-CoV-2 is not yet classified. According to current CDC guidelines “virus isolation in cell culture and initial characterization of viral agents recovered in cultures of SARS-CoV-2 specimens should only be conducted in a biosafety level 3 laboratory using BSL3 practices.”