



# EHS QUARTERLY

Volume 2, Issue 2 - 2020



Throughout these challenging and unprecedented times during the COVID-19 global pandemic, Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) is here to support our CMU community in multiple ways.



Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity (DRBC) Services is managing the university's emergency preparedness and response operations through a virtual Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The EOC serves as a central location to manage and communicate with a campus-wide, cross-functional group comprised of the emergency preparedness and response team and other key stakeholders. The EOC supports the identification and mobilization of resources, intelligence gathering and information sharing. The team also addresses inquiries that are received through the [drbc@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:drbc@andrew.cmu.edu) email address and via the Coronavirus [CMU-Alert](#) website.

Additionally, the DRBC team is assisting departments across the University with their Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plans, whether it is to help create a new Plan, or to support the implementation and update of an existing Plan.



The Risk Operations team is remotely but actively monitoring the campus' "blue light" system of external and internal emergency communication devices on campus to ensure that they continue to function without disruption. The university's emergency notification system, CMU-Alert and the Rave Guardian mobile app are also being actively monitored. Finally, the [Travel Risk Information Program \(TRIP\)](#) continues to serve the university with timely and informative travel advisories and resources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and US State Department, as well as management of the Travel Registry service through Terra Dotta.



Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) is providing essential services by maintaining a physical presence on campus to ensure continuity of critical research operations permitted on campus, including, but not limited to, coordination of gas cylinder delivery/return and hazardous and biological waste management. Services that have transitioned to virtual delivery include safety trainings and issuing hot work and fire impairment permits. ♦

## SAFETY WHILE WORKING FROM HOME

---

Working from home can be challenging in many ways. One of the difficulties may be finding an appropriate work space and making sure it is safe and comfortable. Whether you have a dedicated office or your dining room table has become your new home office, there are safety tips to keep in mind to help make this one aspect of working from home easier.

### Electrical Safety

Transitioning to working from home may present new electrical safety concerns in your home that have not existed before. Here are a few things you can do to prevent electrical hazards while working from home:

- Avoid overloading outlets or power strips.
- Unplug appliances when not in use to save energy and minimize the risk of shock or fire.
- Use an approved UL power strip with at least 15A GFCI protection. Avoid using extension cords. [HowStuffWorks](#) provides good information for why this is important.
- Never plug a space heater or fan into an extension cord or power strip.
- Plug in smartly. Never run cords under rugs, carpets, doors or windows and make sure they do not become tripping hazards. Regularly inspect electrical cords and extension cords for damage.
- Keep papers and other potential combustibles at least three feet away from space heaters and other heat sources.
- Make sure your home has smoke alarms. Test them monthly, change batteries yearly and replace the unit every 10 years.

### Ergonomics

It is likely that you do not have the same type of workstation in your house as you do at the office. This could present some ergonomic challenges that could lead to aches and pains. Follow these tips to help make your workstation setup at home more ergonomic:

- Eliminate sources of glare behind the monitor and try not to face directly into a window.
- Keep your shoulders relaxed with your elbows at your side.
- Do not overreach for your keyboard or writing tools.
- Your elbows should be even with or slightly lower than your keyboard.
- When in a seated position, your hips should be level-to-slightly-higher than your knees.
- If your feet do not touch the floor, use a box or footrest to prop them up.
- If possible, use an external monitor, keyboard and mouse.
- Take regular stretch breaks throughout the day. The EHS website provides a few [stretches](#) you can do at your work space.

In addition, your home office should assure that you can comfortably talk on a telephone, Zoom meeting or look at a computer screen knowing that privacy of sensitive or confidential discussions is maintained.

Working from home should not be any less safe or comfortable than being in your office on campus. EHS is committed to helping you transition into work from home routines. Think through these considerations to stay safe, healthy and productive while working from home. If you have any questions and/or concerns, please contact EHS at [safety@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:safety@andrew.cmu.edu). ♦

## HAND WASHING AND SOCIAL DISTANCING

As COVID-19 continues to spread and the best forms of protection seem to change almost daily, it can be difficult to keep track of the latest information. However, washing hands correctly and maintaining social distancing are two of the easiest forms of protection.

### Hand Washing



It is easy to touch a surface that may be contaminated with the virus and then unknowingly touch your face. The virus can transfer from your hands to your nose and mouth and then enter your body and make you sick.

Therefore, washing hands with soap and water and washing them often is critical because soap works by killing the virus and the water rinses it away.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends washing hands for at least 20 seconds, or the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice. Be sure to wash the backs of hands, between the fingers and under the nails.

Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are a good substitute when soap and water are not available. Use sanitizers with an alcohol concentration between 60 percent and 95 percent because they are more effective at killing the virus than those with a lower alcohol concentration or non-alcohol-based sanitizers. The right way to use a sanitizer is to apply it to the palm of one hand and rub it all over the surfaces of both hands until they are dry.

Once hands are clean, keep them clean. Avoid touching contaminated surfaces and disinfect surfaces that are used every day like phones, keyboards and door handles.

### Social Distancing

The virus can easily spread between people who are in close contact with each other (less than 6 feet). The virus is spread through respiratory droplets during coughing, sneezing and talking. Even people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus. So, stay home as much as possible and maintain at least 6 feet between yourself and other people.

During this time where so much may seem out of our control, we can control how we act. Washing hands and maintaining social distances are two simple actions we can all take to help lessen the spread of COVID-19. ♦



## FACE COVERINGS

---

The CDC advises the use of cloth face coverings in public areas where social distancing is difficult, such as shopping at an essential store. Other situations in which cloth face coverings are recommended include when traveling on public transportation, when caring for someone with a possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection and if you have a possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection and are around others.

This recommendation is being made based on studies that show asymptomatic individuals, or people who do not show COVID-19 symptoms but have the disease, can transmit the virus to others in close proximity, through speaking, coughing, sneezing or other means. Wearing a face covering helps make sure asymptomatic individuals are not unknowingly affecting others. If worn by everyone when outside the home doing essential activities, this can help slow the overall spread of the virus and keep our community safer. Remember the phrase: "My mask protects you, your mask protects me."

Cloth face coverings are to be designed to cover the nose and mouth and can be fashioned with or without sewing from household items such as a scarf, bandana or old t-shirt. The [CDC](#) provides instructions for creation and care of face coverings on their website. Face coverings can be secured to the head with ties or straps or simply wrapped around the lower-face and can be made of a variety of materials, such as cotton, silk or linen.

Here is a list of Dos and Don'ts when wearing face coverings.

- DO use coverings that fit snugly but comfortably and allow for breathing without restriction. Secure behind the head with ties or ear loops. Wear horizontally.
- DO ensure that your nose, mouth and chin are covered at all times.
- DO wash your hands before putting on and immediately after removing.
- DO launder coverings after each use.
- DO NOT touch the mask while wearing it. If you do, wash your hands immediately.
- DO NOT allow the mask to slip under your nose and DO NOT untie straps/unhook ear loops.
- DO NOT touch your eyes, nose or mouth when removing the face covering.
- DO NOT wear when wet from laundering or from spit or mucus.

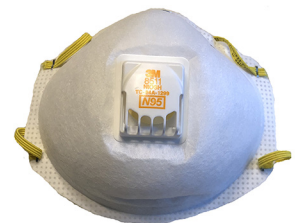
**Note:** Wear a homemade cloth face covering. DO NOT wear a surgical mask or N-95 respirator. Surgical masks and N-95 respirators should be reserved for health care workers, as recommended by the CDC.



Cloth Face Covering



Surgical Mask



N95 Mask

Efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate its effects are underway, but we all need to do our part in helping to slow the spread. Along with government efforts, you can take steps to protect yourself, loved ones and our community. Please follow the order on the use of face coverings and continue to use social distancing and regular hand washing. ♦

## STRATEGIES FOR SELF-CARE WHILE SOCIAL DISTANCING



In the midst of COVID-19, we received a stay at home order to slow the spread of the virus and with that order, for many, the normal day-to-day life has come to a halt. This has left many of us wondering just how we are going to cope with social distancing for an indefinite period of time as the virus runs its course. While we understand it's crucial to stay home as much as possible to protect the health of our bodies and our communities, social distancing can take a toll on mental health.

So how can we protect our sanity when many of the usual methods for dealing with stress — like meeting up with friends or going to the gym — conflict with social distancing guidelines? Having a good self-care strategy is key. Here are some self-care tips to follow while social distancing:

**Create and follow a daily routine** - As much as possible, social distancing should not disrupt sleep-wake cycles, working hours and daily activities. While it might be tempting to not set the alarm clock or keep regular mealtimes, maintaining a regular schedule is crucial to supporting overall health.

**Keep moving** - Many tend to be less mobile when staying in the confines of the home, but exercise is scientifically proven to reduce anxiety and depression.

At home, set aside time to get up and move. Get outside (remember to wear a face covering) to take a stroll, a jog, walk the dog or ride a bike while maintaining a 6-foot distance from others. Stream a [Group X-cercise class](#), use an app or clean the house when the weather does not permit outdoor activities. Whatever the activity, exercise can boost well-being by increasing blood flow and restoring energy.

**Connect** - Although we cannot physically connect with others, there are a variety of tools that can be used to stay connected with each other. Social media platforms can be used to see how people are doing, to share encouraging news or to invite friends to virtual chats or online hangout groups. Make phone calls or connect through Zoom. Hearing the voices of friends and loved ones — or seeing actual faces — goes even further toward offsetting feelings of isolation.

**Disconnect** - At least from the constant flow of news. While staying informed is important, too much exposure to media coverage can feed into feelings of fear and anxiety affecting sleep patterns, mood and general mental health. Disconnect and use time to foster positive emotions and thoughts as much as possible, on your own or through the [Headspace app](#).

**Be of service** - COVID-19 has affected us all, but it is important to recognize that not all are affected equally. As all non-essential businesses were forced to shut down, many are finding themselves without the means to acquire important resources. Donating money to a local food pantry, purchasing gift cards to a favorite restaurant or small business while they are closed or bringing groceries to an elderly neighbor can help lessen the stress of those greatly affected by the virus.

As reality takes hold, and social distancing becomes paramount, it is only natural to feel anxious and at a loss for how to adjust. But in these times, it is important, if not essential, to prioritize self-care. ♦

## BIORAF

With normal day-to-day-life on campus halted for an unknown amount of time, now is a good time to login to BioRaft.

Check your profile to see if you are linked to the proper PI group. Contact your PI or safety coordinator if any changes need to be made.

PIs and safety coordinators should check the individuals within your group, the equipment within the lab, open inspection items and make any necessary changes.

Check your training requirements. Are there any deficiencies? Online classes can be viewed anywhere at any time. Netflix is over-rated, so grab your laptop, some popcorn and enjoy one of the 28 free online, information-packed safety training presentations offered by EHS through BioRaft.

3D Printing Safety Training	Driver Safety Training	Laboratory Safety and Hazardous Waste Training, Part 2	Radiation Safety Training for EM and XPS Users
Aerial Lift Truck Safety	Fall Protection Training	Ladder and Scaffold Safety	Radiation Training for Ancillary Personnel
Back and Lifting Safety	General Safety Orientation	Laser Cutter Safety	Radioactive Materials Safety Training
Compressed Gas and Toxic Gas Procedures	Hand and Power Tool Safety Training	Lockout Tagout	Shipping with Dry Ice
Confined Space Entry	Hazard Communication Training	LSHW: Refresher	Soldering Safety Training
Distracted Driver Training	Hazardous Driving Conditions Training	Overview of the Current NIH Guidelines	Student Shop Safety
DOT Hazardous Materials Receiving	Laboratory Safety and Hazardous Waste Training, Part 1	Personal Protective Equipment	X-Ray Analytical Training

EHS is conducting safety training regularly and all classroom training sessions are being conducted via Zoom. All those who sign up for a classroom training session will receive a link for the Zoom meeting 24 to 48 hours in advance. To receive credit for participating in the training session, you will need to join the session using your login (not your phone) so that the instructor is able to see your name in the participant list.

To login to BioRaft, click the link: <https://www.cmu.edu/ehs/Training/index.html>.

If you have any questions regarding BioRaft or upcoming training sessions, contact EHS at: [safety@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:safety@andrew.cmu.edu). ♦

## MELLON INSTITUTE SAFETY WEEK



Fire extinguisher training during Safety Week



Dr. Shailendra Singh presenting *Compressed Gas Safety*

EHS organized a Safety Week at Mellon Institute during the week of February 10, 2020. The events during Safety Week were open to all faculty, staff and students.

The purpose of Safety Week was to raise safety awareness, provide support for EHS-related matters, increase training compliance and answer any questions regarding safety within Mellon Institute.

Twenty-seven students and researchers attended training sessions throughout the week that covered the following topics:

- Laboratory Safety and Hazardous Waste Management
- Bloodborne Pathogens
- Compressed Gas Safety
- Fire Extinguisher Use
- Common Laboratory Emergencies



Anyone who attended a minimum of four trainings during Safety Week was issued a safety certificate presented by Environmental Health and Safety. Congratulations to Srijani Sakar, Sajjad Dadashi Silab and Francesca Lorandi, who attended the trainings and received a certificate. They are pictured from left to right. ♦

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Paul Minor serves the university as an Environmental Specialist managing hazardous waste, hazardous material and environmental compliance. Paul is a Certified Hazardous Materials Manager (CHMM) with a BLA from Penn State University and has been with CMU since December 2017. Before joining the EHS team, Paul spent 14 years working with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) where he managed environmental audits of regulated facilities and compliance actions as a solid waste supervisor for the DEP Southwest Region's Bureau of Waste Management.

During the COVID-19 shift to remote work, Paul has been working with the waste vendor, Veolia, to coordinate hazardous waste collection and helping to maintain the EHS team's physical presence on campus. ◆

## EHS WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

We encourage all members of the Carnegie Mellon University community to submit safety improvement ideas that impact your personal safety on campus or the safety of the greater community. Your participation will help raise safety awareness in our community! Please submit your safety concerns and ideas to: [safety@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:safety@andrew.cmu.edu).

In addition, if you have any suggestions for the next newsletter, please submit your ideas to Mary Sickles at: [msickles@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:msickles@andrew.cmu.edu). ◆



## SEE SOMETHING? SAY SOMETHING

Help ensure the safety and well-being of the CMU community by calling:

University Police: 412-268-2323

Ethics Hotline: 1-877-700-7050 ◆





## MATCH THE TERM TO ITS DEFINITION

---

Asphyxiant	This is a process by which a job is studied to determine the hazards involved and ways to safely complete the job by procedures and/or personal protective equipment.
Confined space	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
Flashpoint	Clothing and other articles that are used to protect the body from injuries when involved in work related activities.
Job Safety Analysis	The applied science of equipment design, as for the workplace, intended to maximize productivity by reducing fatigue and discomfort to help employees to work more safely and efficiently.
OSHA	The measure of the adverse effect exerted on the human body by a poisonous material.
Physical Hazard	A written document that outlines information and procedures for handling and working with chemicals safely.
Toxicity	Is large enough and so configured that an employee can bodily enter and perform assigned work, has limited or restricted means for entry or exit and is not designed for continuous employee occupancy.
Ergonomics	A chemical, usually in a gas or vapor state, which displaces oxygen or prevents its use in the body by other chemical means.
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Classified as posing one of the following hazardous effects: explosive, flammable self-reactive, oxidizer, pyrophoric, self-heating, organic peroxide, corrosive to metal, gas under pressure, or in contact with water emits flammable gas.
Safety Data Sheet	The minimum temperature at which a liquid gives off vapor in sufficient concentration to form an ignitable mixture with air near the surface of the liquid.

## WORD JUMBLE ANSWERS

---

BIORAFT	RESPIRATOR	PASS	KNEES	CROSSWALK
GOGGLES	HANDRAIL	EVERYONE	EVACUATION	CMU SAFE
ERGONOMICS	FLAMMABLE	GLOVES	EMERGENCY EXITS	

