

Instructions to PIs for Research Ramp-Up (RR) Exercise A

PI RR Planning Exercise A: Space layout designed for safety during research ramp-up

We are empowering you to design how to ramp up the research that you lead. However, this opportunity comes with significant responsibility. In particular, if you choose to ramp up, you will be responsible for making sure that your personnel understand and adhere to all safety guidelines in all of the space under your responsibility (i.e., assigned by your DLC for your research group's use and, if a laboratory space, assigned to your oversight for EHS compliance). To accomplish a safe research ramp-up, you will need to understand the new COVID-19-driven safety guidelines for operations within the MIT space that you oversee, and you will need to establish protocols that bring your spaces in line with that guidance. These guidelines are in addition to all of the safety guidelines that you normally follow and supervise, which must, of course, remain in full effect. In addition, you will continue to be the main point of contact for information, guidance, and reassurance for each of the researchers that you oversee -- graduate students, postdocs, technicians. They will each be looking to you for help on many questions, and MIT and your DLC will be looking to you for your leadership, understanding, and compassion. You cannot require any personnel to return to campus who feel that doing so would be unsafe or untenable for them.

Purpose of this exercise

This exercise is not about the specific individuals that may or may not be able to return to the MIT campus for research activities. Instead, **your RR Planning Exercise A is first and foremost about examining each and every room that you oversee and establishing COVID-19-era protocols for the use of those rooms.** Each room is your responsibility, and failure to plan or a poorly executed plan would put the safety of your personnel at risk and could result in the shutdown of research for your lab, floor, DLC, or even all of MIT.

Things to know before you get started:

- **Floor plans:** Your DLC will provide you with floor plans and the square footage of each room assigned to you.
- **Room capacity limits:** Each and every one of your controlled spaces will need to adhere to a maximum personal density AND spacing in static working situations at all times (see below). Plans should be made for static work situations in which each individual occupies a relatively fixed location for more than 10 minutes at a time. Transient interactions that occur with less than 6 feet (ft) of separation between individuals are acceptable, but they should be very occasional and as brief as possible.

Key Steps

1. Using the floor plans provided by your DLC, **determine the maximum possible static occupancy for each of your assigned rooms**. To do this, start by taking the square footage (sf) of each room and dividing by 160 and rounding down. For rooms smaller than 320 sf, the maximum occupancy is 1 person.
2. Now, examine the layout of each room, including benches, hoods and other large equipment, and determine if and how you can place people so that **all pairs are at least 6 ft apart (more is preferable)** while carrying out their primary research activities. *If the layout of a room does not allow personnel to maintain this distancing, then the actual max occupancy of a room will be lower than calculated above.* Mark those locations on the floor plan and indicate the final maximum occupancy next to the room number.

Room size (sf)	100	200	300	400	500	700	1000
Max possible occupancy	1	1	1	2	3	4	6
Actual max occupancy	1	1	1	≤2	≤3	≤4	≤6

Note that these are maximum room occupancies. You may choose to have fewer people with greater spacing if you choose. We expect that many PIs will choose such options, especially in Phase 1 of the ramp-up.

3. As discussed below, your ramp-up plan may include shifts of different personnel over the course of a day. If so, you should consider rotating the positions of people between shifts.
4. Plan for and note any expected occasional room use (non-static occupancy). For example, some rooms may be used by two people without fixed stations. In those cases, they should remain at least 6 feet apart except for periods of less than 10 minutes when absolutely necessary. Consider relocating shared equipment to common spaces whenever possible to minimize the number of people requiring access to your lab space.
5. For rooms that are not expected to be used at all in the RR Phase 1, designate those as unused.
6. If you share a room with another PI (e.g., a tissue culture room or common equipment room), you need to coordinate with the other lab so that the actual maximum occupancy in the space is never exceeded.
7. After considering steps 1-6 above, use any electronic editor (e.g., Adobe Acrobat, PowerPoint, Preview) to make an electronic markup of your floor plan similar to the examples in Figure 3. Use dots to indicate positions of individuals as shown below. Note plans that do not conform to guidelines are shown in Figure 4.
8. In the [RR Planning Exercise A Checklist](#) (also shown in Appendix 1), write a short (<1 page) narrative of how you plan to manage your space to follow the guidelines above. Focus that narrative particularly on non-standard rooms or situations that you foresee in terms of maintaining density and/or distance guidelines and your plan to manage those conditions.

9. Designate one member of your lab to be your COVID-19 Designated Monitor. In addition to yourself, your COVID-19 Designated Monitor will help in the development, execution, and oversight of these plans. This individual should double-check your calculations and provide input on how the plan will impact research in the lab. Provide the name and MIT email address of this person on the RR Planning Exercise A Checklist (see Appendix 1).
10. Complete the EHS “Laboratory checklist for ramp-up inspection” checklists (see [Appendix 6](#)).
11. Complete the [RR Planning Exercise A Checklist](#) (see [Appendix 1](#)) to ensure that you have done all of the necessary steps of this exercise.
12. **Submit your marked-up floor plans and completed RR Planning Exercise A Checklist to the AO of the DLC as soon as possible, but no later than May 26.** If you belong to multiple DLCs, send the materials to the AO of the DLC where your space is located. Your AO and DLC head may have questions or requested adjustments to your plans, and they will need time to review them.



Figure 3. Examples of space plans that meet the criteria for safe space layout. (A) A 1,061 sf lab space can accommodate a maximum of 6 people working at static stations (solid circles); **however, PIs may choose a lower number of researchers for increased distancing between workers.** Transient interactions (less than 10 minutes) that occur with less than 6 feet of separation between individuals are acceptable, but they should be very occasional and as brief as possible (e.g., returning a reagent to a refrigerator, handwashing at a sink, etc.) **(B)** Example of a 140 sf office space that can accommodate a maximum of 1 person. Please note that such spaces should be used only when waiting for experiments, and should not be occupied by individuals solely for activities that can be performed remotely. **(C)** Example of a 543 sf laboratory space that can accommodate a maximum of 3 people working at static stations. **(D)** Example of a 627 sf tissue culture room. Although the 160 sf/ person rule would allow a maximum occupancy of 3, in this case, the lab layout does not allow for that many researchers. Instead, the actual maximum occupancy is 2.

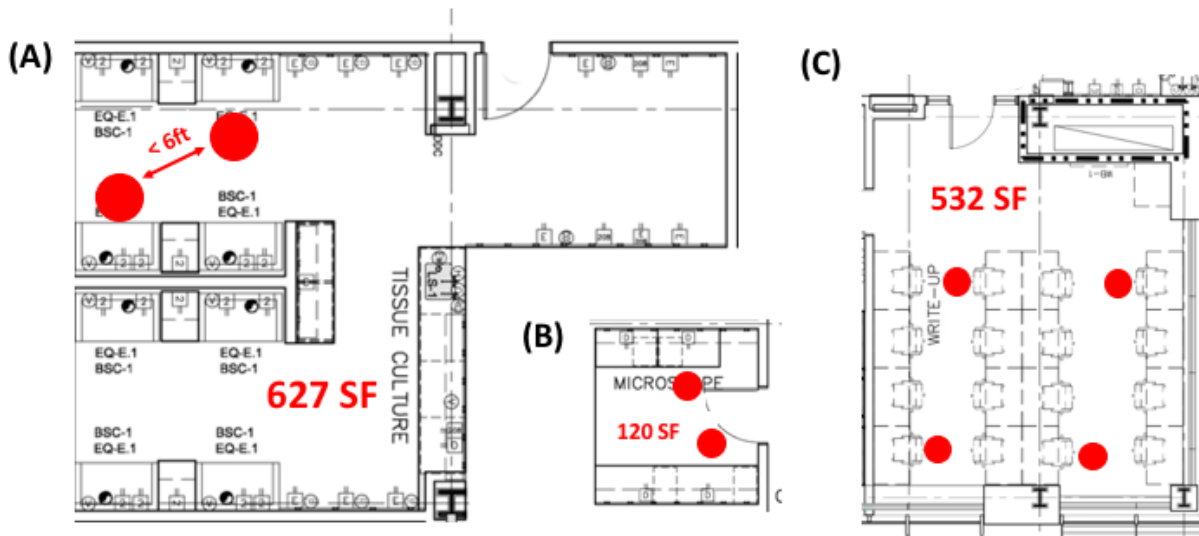


Figure 4. Examples of space plans that DO NOT meet the criteria for safe lab layout. (A) A 627 sf tissue culture room can accommodate a maximum of 3 people working at static stations (solid circles); however, there needs to be 6 feet of physical distance between workers. **(B)** A 120 sf microscope room can only accommodate 1 person under the guidelines. **(C)** Even though this plan has 6 feet of physical distance between people, a 532 sf room can accommodate a maximum of 3 people.