

PSC Safety Refresh and Reentry Orientation
February 17, 2022
Questions and Answers from Zoom Conference

Q: Uta Ruett (she/her): I wonder if we should revisit chemical safety as well, and not only have electrical safety as main emphasis.

Answer on Feb 17: Good point, particular emphasis on electrical safety will be for reasons Paul covers next but does not de-emphasize other topics. Chemical safety will get a particular focus coming up with Safe Labs 2022 and I will briefly mention that later in this presentation.

Subsequent information: Safe Labs 2022 will be announced in early March and at that time, a survey will be sent out to chemical owners to identify legacy chemical identification and disposal. The in-field consultations with chemical owners, chemical identification and support will next occur between April and September 2022, with waste pickups happening from June to September 2022. Besides legacy chemical identification, the additional focus will be on compressed gas cylinder inventory and removal, since there are over 5,500 compressed gas cylinders onsite. Building operations teams will conduct inventory and support removal of unwanted and high-risk cylinders in from March to April 2022 under this Safe Labs 2022 program. More detail to come in future Lab-wide announcement.

Q: Uta Ruett: Playing devil's advocate: With this amount of work going on at the APS with many outside groups coming on-site performing experiments frequently unique for us, is ZERO incidents indeed a reasonably achievable goal, or does it mean at the end, that we "hide" or don't report problems to achieve this goal?

A: The aspirational target should remain at zero incidents but understand what your scenario entails given the volume and complexity of work going on in parallel increasing the incident occurrence potential. At minimum, want to ensure that any consequence is mitigated to the absolute minimum impactful outcome and, if possible, avoided outright through application of our controls (admin, engineered or other). Problems and safety issues encountered should be reported, as intent is to continue to encourage a safety conscious work environment. These reports are essential to put in place corrective actions that shape our future safety performance.

Q: Curt Preissner: Paul, what were the specifics of the incorrect LOTO?

A: The incident involved opening the disconnect wearing appropriate PPE for switching and applying an *administrative* lock without signing out the lock in the logbook. In addition to the incorrect type of lock used, a LOTO is not complete until the ZVV is completed to ensure that all sources of hazardous energy have been removed.

Q: Lynn Ribaud: This presentation seems to suggest that anyone can do LOTO and ZVV. This is *not* the case. Training is required.

Answer on Feb 17: Certainly, that is the case (not anyone can perform LOTO and ZVV) as you note, and as Paul just mentioned, "qualified individuals" in his most recent mention while discussing barricades required by mode of electrical work.

Q: Don Jensen: Will the office closed mask-off rule still be in effect or can we have our masks off and the doors open. I am assuming it will still be in place but would like clarification.

Answer on Feb 17: While facemasks are not required when you are alone in your office and door closed, you are required to have mask on when your office is open.

Q: Don Jensen: With the increased presence will we eventually have a online system for tracking users proximity badges instead of each group maintaining a data log of this?

A: An online system for tracking assignment of proximity badges to general users onsite is not planned at this time, and remains a local log system at each beamline, including CAT beamlines.

Q: Jon Tischler: What does “voluntary reentry” mean?

A: Starting February 28, the maximum telework as well as limited operations condition that has been imposed previously by DOE going back to late March 2020, will be lifted as Argonne begins a return to normal operations. This date also includes the removal of an onsite population cap, thus employees have the option to return to site in a more significant capacity than current. Flexible Work Agreements technically become available to be completed on February 28, although many have already been completed and routed to supervisors to date. Any approved Flexible Work Agreement will take effect only on March 14, 2022, hence the term “voluntary” before this date

Q: Antonino Miceli: There are many shared offices. Since some people will be rarely onsite, will more office open up?

A: As noted in the presentation (slide below), those whose roles permit the selection of the “Rarely Onsite” flexible work option and have the agreement approved by their supervisor up through the Division Director, will not maintain dedicated office space. This office space will be returned to the division for allocation / usage.

OFFICE SPACE

For employees who are rarely onsite



RARELY ONSITE

- Job duties performed effectively remotely
- May need to attend occasional in-person activities

- Consult with your supervisor on your work schedule (fixed or flexible)
- Complete a remote work agreement *Workday Flexible Work Arrangement Form*
- Office space is not dedicated; hoteling space will be available
- Lab-provided equipment setup can be picked up at the Lab or shipped to your work location
- Consult supervisor for approval on travel to the Lab

Q: Constance Vanni: How will returning workers obtain their proximity badges? Can supervisors obtain them in advance and distribute among their staff?

Answer on Feb 17: Yes, supervisors can send a list of required proximity badges to their ESH Coordinator so that the badges can be made available for returning staff.

Q: Rich Ferry: The KN95 masks in the stockroom seem to be very small and the ear loops begin to hurt after a while. There are the mask bands in the stockroom that help this issue a bit, but would it be possible to get N95 masks in the stockroom? The N95s have straps that go around the back of the head and do not pull on the ears.

Answer on Feb 17: ESH and Occupational Health & Safety will look into this and provide a follow up response. There are currently no plans to provide N95s since they are considered a respirator and require specific health, fit, cleaning, storage, and other precautions. You may source your own N95, however according to [OSHA](#) you need to take certain precautions to be sure that the respirator itself does not present a hazard.

Please note that effective February 16, 2022, neck gaiters and bandanas are no longer allowed for use on-site unless combined with another mask to improve fit and filtration, such as a surgical mask beneath a bandana.

Q: Uta Ruett: Proximity sensors: Have you looked into the efficiency by asking people to confirm their close contacts in the last week for example? We have no way to check by ourselves, if the recording is correct.

Answer on Feb 17: A spot check of contacts can be done but is not performed on a consistent basis at this time. Proximity badge data is accessed by HEW personnel in the case of a positive case onsite and is meant to supplement personnel interviews for determining close contact sets.

Q: Don Jensen: With the changes to occupancy rules are folks allowed to dine together in conference rooms again or will there still be designated eating area rules in effect?

Answer on Feb 17: There will be eating areas and individuals must be 6 ft apart when eating or drinking, since their mask must be removed.

Q: Antonino Miceli: We have some unvaxxed and immunocompromised staff...

A: Understand that there are unvaccinated and immunocompromised staff and believe this question was in relation to sharing office space. For those that share an office, a schedule to minimize or avoid co-occupancy can be worked out with supervisor(s). However, the Lab continues to maintain a high vaccination rate (96%) and an extremely low positive case rate onsite from nearly 1200 saliva PCR tests conducted weekly, which includes both vaccinated and unvaccinated staff at this time, a far higher vaccination rate and lower positive case rate than the nation, state of Illinois and even Cook, DuPage and Will Counties. Surveillance testing will remain required of all unvaccinated staff after February 28 as an additional COVID control and as a condition of a granted exemption.

Q: Raymond Davis: Are we allowed to wear our own cloth 2- and 3-layer masks?

A: Yes, personal cloth face coverings are permitted at this time. However, recommend that all staff utilize the Argonne-branded cloth face covering, surgical mask or KN95 masks - all available in the APS stockroom - as a consistent face covering standard.

The Argonne-branded 3-ply face masks have gone through Argonne Occupational Health & Safety review and testing and provide better protection than most commercially available cloth face coverings.

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Q: Jon Tischler: What is difference between XINK Form 13B and the Workday form?

Answer on Feb 17: The XINK Form 13B is for alternative work schedules. The Flexible Work Arrangement is for remote/virtual work arrangements, not an actual work week schedule shown on XINK Form 13B.

Q: Tony Scaminaci: What do Argonne Associates who are already working remotely need to do beyond what we've already done?

Answer on Feb 17: Please keep your manager/supervisor updated on your work schedule. Argonne Associates do not complete the Flexible Work Arrangement Form.

Q: Don Jensen: With the change to masks I am a person who happens to have a larger noggin, and Paul, I believe you have seen the cloth masks I wear, which seal well around my Face can i wear a medical mask over that type of mask. The medical masks do not seal well on my face, even the largest ones I have found online.

Answer on Feb 17: Yes, a medical mask can be worn in addition to the cloth mask that you are currently using to provide the required filtering mask.

Q: Arvind Ramanathan: Can the remote work arrangement be reversed or changed or once signed it is fixed? As in, if an employee initially chooses to be fully onsite and then a few months down the line feels some of the work can be done remotely, can he/she change it?

A: Yes, Flexible Work Agreements can be modified at any time in Workday. The only caveat is that the maximum term for an agreement is 1 year, as a hard upper limit. Agreements can be renewed, and the 1-year maximum duration applies for subsequent renewals as well.

Q: Brian Poncin: Will technicians be given any options for alternative/hybrid type work schedules? For example, 4 10's.

A: Hybrid / virtual work permissions in Flexible Work Agreements are based on the job responsibilities and are not available for those with roles that require full-time, onsite presence to fulfill job duties.

Q: Chihyuan Yao: I am an Argonne Associate. Do I need to submit work arrangement form? How?

Answer on Feb 17: Argonne Associates do not complete the Flexible Work Arrangement Form.

Q: Jay Abrams: Are Flexible Work Agreements required for contract workers (engineering work)?

Answer on Feb 17: Contract workers do not complete Flexible Work Agreements and work according to the terms of their contract.

Q: Marion White: There is evidence that the booster (3rd shot) effectiveness decreases a lot after four months. Is HEW planning to issue second boosters (fourth shot), at least to high-risk individuals?

A: The Lab continues to monitor CDC guidance on the COVID-19 vaccine, including when additional booster shots might be needed. To stay up to date on the vaccine guidance, please see the [CDC webpage](#). To date, the CDC has not made a determination on when a second booster is required, following a primary series (1 shot for Johnson & Johnson, 2 shots for Pfizer/Moderna). As CDC guidance is updated, the Lab will provide additional guidance on staying up to date for the COVID vaccine.

There are some definitions from the CDC around vaccinations that are helpful as we have these conversations:

Up to date means a person has received all recommended COVID-19 vaccines, including any booster dose(s) when eligible.

Fully vaccinated means a person has received their **primary series of COVID-19 vaccines**.

If you have questions, are immunocompromised or believe you should receive additional doses of the COVID-19 vaccine (above the primary series and one booster), please consult your personal physician.

Q: Andrey Yakovenko: When Update to users about three people per ESAF will be sent? Can we start updating our users with new information?

A: The general user population has been notified as of February 4, 2022, via email. Additionally, one can point a general user to the APS website for user information and COVID protocol [available here](#).

Q: Nick Sereno: Just to clarify, proximity badges and weekly testing for everyone is required until further notice (as well as masks, social distancing for the unvaccinated)?

A: As of the most recent information on February 23, no new enrollments of **vaccinated** staff into the SHIELD saliva weekly testing program should occur. Based on approved Flexible Work Agreement completed to date, all unvaccinated staff will be auto enrolled in the SHIELD program effective March 14, 2022, unless they have an approved "Rarely Onsite" selection in a Flexible Work Agreement.