Hygiene and infection control concept of TU Darmstadt for SARS-CoV-2

Version 1.4.1
(Stand 16 October 2020)
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1 Introduction

The following information and guidelines are based on the recommendations of the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) and the currently applicable ordinances of the State of Hesse. The coronavirus pandemic is a challenge touching all of society and requires all of us to act responsibly. TU Darmstadt decided to follow our current path by contributing to our joint efforts of containing the pandemic and protecting all members of the TU.

This hygiene and infection control concept applies to all members of TU Darmstadt in all buildings of TU Darmstadt including premises rented or leased by TU Darmstadt. It does not apply to those organisational units with which separate agreements have been negotiated (such as tenancy agreements for premises of TU Darmstadt). It also applies to all non-TU members who are frequenting TU Darmstadt spaces as guests or as employees of contractors working at TU Darmstadt. It must be ensured that these external parties are familiar with the hygiene and infection control concept as well.

Assessing risks for employees and staff at their respective workplaces and identifying and implementing the necessary protective counter measures are one of the key demands of §5 of the Arbeitsschutzgesetz (ArbSchG - Safety and Health at Work Act). Supervisors must produce risk assessments for every single workplace and must update them to reflect substantial changes in working conditions. For this reason, the risk assessment addendum “Setting up a workplace with regard to the coronavirus pandemic” is attached to the hygiene and infection control concept for your convenience. In this risk assessment, pandemic-specific risks and their corresponding protective counter measures have been added to the already existing risk assessment. Supervisors must complete this risk assessment form and implement the respective protective counter measures. The support team will advise supervisors as necessary.

Based on the higher-level hygiene and infection control concept of TU Darmstadt, a hygiene and infection control concept must be produced containing the necessary modifications and additions for the respective organisational unit (e.g. for laboratory work, project groups, excursions etc.) and must be sent to the support team gesundheit@tu-darmstadt.de. The support team will be happy to assist as necessary.

This hygiene concept (version 1.4) is applicable until revoked due to changing statutory provisions or newly imposed conditions by the local Gesundheitsamt Darmstadt-Dieburg (public health department).

Darmstadt, 16 October 2020

The President of TU Darmstadt

2 General rules of hygiene and infection control

2.1 Basic rules of conduct

Please observe the following general rules of conduct during all your activities:

- The Corona-Kontakt- und Betriebsbeschränkungsverordnung (corona contact and operation restriction ordinance) of the state of Hesse in effect as of 2 October 2020 includes a new regulation regarding wearing mouth-nose covers: According to this regulation, all members of TU Darmstadt are required to wear mouth-nose covers when using the so-called traffic areas (such as corridors, staircases etc.) inside of university buildings. Students can take off their mouth-nose covers once they have taken their seats in their course rooms or for an exam.
According to this ordinance, this regulation does not apply to persons who cannot wear mouth-nose covers due to impairments of health or disability.

With going into effect of the “Vierten Verordnung zur Änderung der Corona-Kontakt- und Betriebsbeschränkungsverordnung” (fourth ordinance to modify the corona contact and operation restriction ordinance – cokobev) on 02 October 2020, mouth-nose covers must be worn in all areas outside the immediate workplaces.

Observing the required distancing regulations has been top priority for all hygiene and infection control measures. When carrying out your work, it is therefore necessary to always keep a minimum distance of 1.5 meters (4–5 steps) from all people around you whether indoors or outdoors.

Should it become necessary (in exceptional cases only) to decrease this minimum distance during your work, wearing a mouth-nose cover is mandatory for all those present.

For this reason, you must have your personal hygiene material (surgical mask) with you at all times.

Observe the cough and sneeze etiquette: Cough and sneeze into paper tissues or your bend arm. Discard your paper tissues after use immediately in a dustbin/garbage can.

Wash your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds using soap and water.

Keep your hands away from your face, i.e. do not touch your face.

Do not touch others in greeting like shaking hands, hugging etc.

Always keep a sufficient distance to other people particularly those showing symptoms of illness such as coughing, sneezing or fever.

2.2 Hygiene and infection control material

Every organisational unit (such as department, institute, research group, central services) is independently responsible for providing their employees and staff with the required material. Orders for all hygiene material specified under point 2.2 can be placed centrally via the Directorate III using this email address: dez-3-z@zv.tu-darmstadt.de. Each unit must bear the costs of these materials.

2.2.1 Hand sanitiser

Please use hand sanitiser only if washing your hands with soap and water is not possible. Using hand sanitisers is not an adequate substitute for washing your hands regularly as detailed above.

2.2.2 Mouth-nose coverings

Simple mouth-nose coverings are intended primarily to protect other people from very fine droplets and particles that you exhale. Wearing such a covering is, therefore, highly recommended to protect others. However, this is not an alternative to keeping the required minimum distance to other people. These coverings are only a complementing infection control measure.

How to put on a surgical mask:

- Touch a surgical mask on the outside only.
- Pick up the surgical mask by its elastic bands. Hold the surgical mask in front of your face.
- Pull both elastic bands behind your ears.
- Press the nose clip of the surgical mask firmly to your nose until the surgical mask form-fits your nose and cheeks.
- Pull the surgical mask with your thumb and index finger down and past your chin.
- Put on your glasses (spectacles).
How to take off a surgical mask:

- Do not touch the surgical mask with your hands.
  Take hold of both elastic bands with both hands at the same time and pull them to the front.

2.2.3 Disposable gloves

Wearing disposable gloves is not necessary when observing proper and thorough hand-washing routines. It becomes necessary only whenever there are no hand-washing facilities nearby. When wearing disposable gloves, please note:

- Dry your hands well before putting on disposable gloves.
- Wear disposable gloves as briefly as possible (no longer than 2 hours at a time, otherwise the moisture trapped between gloves and skin will damage your skin).
- Do not touch the contaminated outside of disposable gloves when taking them off. Roll them off instead.
- Throw disposable gloves in the dustbin (garbage can) immediately after use.
- Should you be unable to wash your hands right away, use hand sanitiser instead.

2.2.4 Workplace separators

In principle workplace separators, made from plexiglass for instance, should only be used where people cannot keep a minimum distance of 1.5 m permanently, be it for workflow or technical reasons. Make sure that even if the workplace is separated, it is ventilated thoroughly and regularly. This applies particularly to areas that are frequented regularly and extensively by others, e.g. to receive counselling, to get information or material. This may also include laboratories and shop floors. For more information, read sections “3.5 Laboratory and shop floor operations” and “3.7 Workplaces open to the public.”

2.3 Indoor ventilation

Ventilate the rooms you are using thoroughly and regularly to reduce the number of potential causative organisms in the air and trapped in tiny droplets. It is best to ventilate several times a day for 5 to 10 minutes. The simplest way to ventilate is by opening windows. This airing by opening the window must be done at start of work in any room and must be repeated regularly for as long as you work there. A ventilation (or airing) interval of 60 minutes for office rooms and of 20 minutes for meeting rooms is recommended. To this end, open the window completely to allow for maximum air exchange. This is called “Stoßlüften”, i.e. impact or surge ventilation. In rooms with room ventilation systems, manual ventilation by opening windows is usually not possible because these rooms are supplied with fresh air automatically via central control systems.

The use of recirculation units (fans, ventilators, air purifiers or cleaners, fan heaters etc.) is only permitted in offices that are used by one person, as these ventilators circulate aerosol matter around the room.

When ventilating rooms and hallways, do not use doorstops or similar to keep fire doors open. Fire doors must be able to close automatically for fire protection reasons.

2.4 Cleaning

All rooms are cleaned according to the usual cleaning intervals based on the pre-determined cleaning schedules which are available for reference at the organisational units or can be requested at the office in charge via reinigung@zv.tu-darmstadt.de.
Cleaning beyond the measures stated above will not be necessary according to the Robert Koch Institute: “To disinfect domestic and public areas and surfaces on a large scale routinely, even those frequently touched, is not recommended despite the current COVID pandemic. Instead cleaning these areas and surfaces appropriately should be first choice.” (Source: https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/Reinigung_Desinfektion.html, status: 27 July 2020).

It is still very important to wash your hands regularly and thoroughly and to observe the general instructions on hygiene.

2.5 Workwear, personal protection equipment and work equipment

Workwear and personal protection equipment must not be shared with others. They are for personal use only. Work equipment such as tools should whenever possible, be used by one person only. Should this not be possible, this work equipment must be cleaned regularly. While at it, observe hand-washing routine as well.

2.6 Returning from travel

Your presence at work after a return from a business trip or holiday can only be granted under the following conditions. When returning from a non-risk area, take into account the considerations stated in No. 2.6.1; when returning from a risk area, take into account the requirements stated in No. 2.6.2.

A one-off negative test result shortly before or when entering Germany is not sufficiently certain to allow you to be present at work responsibly.

2.6.1 Returning from an area or country that is not at risk

- An up-to-date list of risk areas/risk states can be found on the website of the Robert Koch Institute. Again, please evaluate responsibly and carefully what risks and hazards you were exposed to during your trip, and what consequences they could have for you and your colleagues.
- If you are concerned that you may have been exposed to an increased risk of infection, you should contact your supervisor/manager and, if necessary, arrange for mobile working.
- Should you consider such a test, please take note of the information mentioned above. In case of questions, please feel free to contact our University Medical Officers (University Medical Service (mas GmbH)).

2.6.2 Returning from an area or country that is at risk

- An up-to-date list of risk areas/risk states can be found on the website of the Robert Koch Institute.
- You are obliged to inform your supervisor/manager about your return and to reach an agreement with him/her on mobile work for a period of up to fourteen days.
- This also applies if a recognised test with a negative result has been taken upon entry or before departure from the country of travel. Corona virus tests are generally acceptable, but a one-off test does not offer sufficient certainty. After 5—7 days, the test can be repeated. If the results of further tests are also negative, mobile work can be shortened by a maximum of 4 days to a period of 10 days in total, and your supervisor/manager may consider allowing you to work in the office in compliance with the relevant regulations.
- If a test or test result is available, this must be communicated to the supervisor/manager.

Beginning work in person without the measures mentioned earlier is not possible!

This rule also applies in case you have been in a travel area the past 14 days that was subsequently declared a risk state/risk area.
2.7 How to deal with COVID-19 infected people

If you are working at TU-Darmstadt and feel symptoms such as coughing, fever and/or shortness of breath, inform your supervisor/manager or the Departmental Office and go home immediately. Get in touch with your general practitioner or the Gesundheitsamt (public health department) by phone to discuss how to proceed.

Should an employee or staff member call in sick to work because of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 infection, we ask you to notify us via gesundheit@tu-darmstadt.de so we can initiate any further steps that may prove necessary together with you.

Naturally, we will handle all information and data involved confidentially.

For further information please refer to https://www.intern.tu-darmstadt.de/verwaltung/dez_iv/corona_leitfaden_und_hygienekonzept_der_tu_darmstadt/index.de.jsp.

2.8 Keeping participation lists

For a quick tracing of infection chains in case of a proven COVID-19 case, a participation list with the following information should be kept for face-to-face events with multiple participants at TU Darmstadt (e.g. for courses and meetings outside your own work area):

- Name, first name
- Residential address
- Email address
- Phone number
- Date of participation

The list is to be kept for four weeks, protected from the inspection of third parties, and is then to be destroyed in accordance with data protection regulations.

This urgent recommendation is based on the following legal basis: According to §1 (2) no. 2 of the “Corona-Kontakt- und Betriebsbeschränkungsverordnung” (corona contact and operation restriction ordinance) dated 7 May 2020, university teaching is permitted again if a comprehensive hygiene and distance concept is available. Part of this concept is the recording of contact data. This is based on §1 (2b) lit. D (status: 06 July 2020) of this ordinance. Accordingly, for events with fewer than 250 participants, the organiser must record the name, address and telephone number of the participants to enable the tracing of infections; the organiser must keep the data available for the relevant authorities for a period of one month from the start of the event, protected from inspection by third parties, and must forward it to the relevant authorities on request; in addition, the organiser must delete or destroy this data immediately after expiry of the deadline; the provisions of Art. 13, 15, 18 and 20 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) regarding the obligation to provide information and the right to information on personal data shall not apply.

3 Hygiene measures case by case

3.1 Office work and meetings

The regulation to move working time to mobile work, if possible, applies until revoked. For more detailed and current information, refer to “Coronavirus – Instructions and Guidelines for Employees and
Staff” under “Information A-Z” on the Department VII webpage. These also include regulations regarding gatherings on official business.
Should it be necessary to work on site, the following basic rules apply:

- Rooms can be used by several people at the same time, provided that the minimum distance of 1.5 metres (4–5 steps) can be maintained and regular thorough ventilation can be carried out. If in doubt, please contact the University Medical Officers.
- In consultation with the supervisor/manager, employees and staff members can agree on a combination of mobile work and work on site.

The number of face-to-face meetings must be restricted to the absolute minimum. Alternative online communication formats should be used instead. Should face-to-face meetings be absolutely required, the number of participants must be reduced, suitable rooms must be chosen and to prevent further virus infections, the precautionary steps such as sneeze and cough etiquette, a minimum safety distance between participants etc. must be observed.

For more information regarding working on site, refer to “Coronavirus – Instructions and Guidelines for Employees and Staff” under “Information A-Z” on the Department VII webpage.

3.2 Use of shared spaces

When using shared spaces such as break rooms and tea kitchens, you must observe the minimum distance of 1.5 m (4–5 steps). Breaks must be taken per person at different times to avoid direct contact. When using tea kitchens, you must observe customary hygiene rules regarding the use of cutlery and dishes as well as tea towels.

3.3 Using changing rooms, toilets and washrooms

In toilet facilities, do not stand around the sinks as a group at the same time.

Shared showering facilities will generally remain closed until further notice.

Please observe the minimum distance to other people in the changing rooms as well. Should it be impossible to maintain such a minimum distance due to room design, organisational measures must be put in place such as one-person access at a time only.

Regular ventilation of sanitary facilities must be ensured. If changing rooms are used, ventilation must also occur after each use.

3.4 Mobile work

Workflows must be organised and designed in such a way that working on site at TU Darmstadt will be reduced to the bare minimum. Employees and staff members should continue to opt for working from home in consultation with their supervisor/manager whenever possible.

For more detailed and current information, refer to “Coronavirus – Instructions and Guidelines for Employees and Staff” under “Information A-Z” on the Department VII webpage.

3.5 Laboratory and shop floor operations

Necessary work in laboratories can continue provided the general hygiene and infection control measures are observed. In addition, the following safety precautions must be observed, particularly in
rooms that are used by more than one person at the same time. Should it not be possible to ensure a safety distance of 1.5 m (4–5 steps) at all times:

a. Organisational measures ensuring safety distances in rooms and buildings must be put in place, such as a guiding system, signposting, visiting rules, re-organisation of workflows etc.

b. Should there be areas where safety distances cannot be ensured at all times, those persons working or spending time in these areas must wear protective mouth-nose covers (for instance when assessing products).

c. Should a laboratory workplace require a lengthy task activity that makes minimum distancing impossible, a separation to adjoining workplaces is recommended (like a plexiglass divider).

d. To prevent direct contact, consider time offsets for starting/ending work and breaks. In addition, consider offset working hours by mutual agreement between supervisor/manager and employees/staff.

e. Should several groups work one after the other on the same day in the same laboratory, the respective laboratory manager must ensure that the used work surfaces are being cleaned before turning this workspace over to the next group. For work equipment used during laboratory work, refer to section “2.5 Workwear, personal protection equipment and work equipment”.

f. Laboratories must be vented regularly and thoroughly.

All supplementing hygiene and infection control measures must correspond with the applicable requirements regarding safety and health protection at work.

### 3.6 Trainees and apprentices at workplaces

Should it be necessary for trainees and apprentices to be present on site, the workflows must be organised in such a way that work can be resumed safely while adhering to the applicable hygiene and infection control measures. The instructor in charge is responsible for setting up a safe working environment. In addition to this requirement, each workplace environment must be assessed (such as specific requirements for laboratory work, shop floors or offices). To ensure full infection control, processes and work assignments need to be organised in such a way that parts of them can also be done from home. If necessary, respective measures need to be coordinated with the training/education provider in charge.

### 3.7 Workplaces open to the public

Once TU Darmstadt is open to the public again (e.g. for personal counselling at the offices for student affairs, opening of information desks and counters, central post offices), installing fixed plexiglass dividers for sneeze and cough protection is recommended in addition to the other general hygiene measures, provided there is enough space. Alternatively, protective mouth-nose covers must be used by both parties. Only one student or person seeking advice is allowed to enter and be in the room at a time. In case of information desks and counters, a minimum distance of 1.5 m (4–5 steps) must be maintained.

### 3.8 Working outdoors

A minimum distance of 1.5 meters (4–5 steps) must also be observed between people working outside (technical services, HRZ employees, gardeners, postal services) and possible passers-by. If the tasks involved cannot be done while observing a minimum distance, then all involved must wear protective mouth-nose covers.
Tools and equipment shared with others need to be cleaned after each use before handing them over. Wash your hands regularly. Should this not be possible because there are no hand-washing facilities nearby, use hand sanitiser instead.

### 3.9 Use of university vehicles

Have **university vehicles** be used by one person per vehicle per day only. Those in charge of university vehicles must provide non-alcoholic disinfection tissues so the user can wipe down frequently-touched surfaces such as steering wheel, back mirror, gearshift lever, Radio/GPS controls).

Should it be necessary that not just the driver but another person rides along at the same time in **other university vehicles** (such as transporters, lorries, vans or service vehicles of the technical services, the HRZ and the Directorate IV), the passenger must wear a protective mouth-nose cover and must sit on the back bench, if available.

### 4 Studying and teaching

Teaching on-line via digital channels still applies to the summer semester 2020 and the winter semester 2020/2021. Exceptions are possible only for courses requiring compulsory attendance. Every attendance event, with the exception of work placements/internships and excursions, must be justified and must be confirmed in advance with the responsible Departmental Office. However, regardless of the approval procedure, a hygiene concept must be prepared and sent to gesundheit@tu-darmstadt.de. Please also note point 2.8 (keeping participation lists) above, which applies to these events.

#### 4.1 Final theses and laboratory work

Theoretical Bachelor’s and Master’s theses can be registered at any time. For completing or registering experimental final theses and laboratory work, however, the following two requirements must be met:

a. The supervisor in charge must be on site and must admit students/research assistants personally.

b. The supervisor in charge must ensure that the hygiene regulations stated in section “2. General rules of hygiene and infection control” are observed.

Presence in the building must be limited to the experimental part of the work only.

#### 4.2 Excursions

Should it not be possible to offer substitute courses, excursions are a good alternative provided the general hygiene requirements are observed.

#### 4.3 Oral exams

For oral exams on site, the following steps must be taken:

- The number of participants must be limited to the bare minimum.
- Suitable rooms must be chosen where a minimum distance of 1.5 m (4–5 steps) between everyone involved can be maintained.
- The regulations stated in section “2. General rules of hygiene and infection control” are observed.

For detailed information regarding the organisation and implementation of oral exams, please refer to “**Information on conducting examinations and courses under corona conditions**” on the webpage of the Directorate II.
4.4 Written exams

For current and detailed information regarding the flow and organisation of written exams, please refer to “Information on conducting examinations and courses under corona conditions” on the webpage of the Directorate II.
The risk assessment “Setting up a workplace with regard to the coronavirus pandemic” supplements the already existing risk assessment by including pandemic-specific risks and their corresponding protective counter measures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risks</th>
<th>Does not apply to work area</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Possible protective measures</th>
<th>Defined measures</th>
<th>Date implemented</th>
<th>Responsible:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is no hand washing facility near the workplace (for instance, when working outdoors or with transport services).</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide hand sanitiser.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The minimum distance of 1.5 m (4–5 steps) between individual persons cannot be maintained.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Protective mouth-nose covers must be worn by all people affected. At worksites with direct “customer contact”, protective shields must be installed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multi-occupation of office rooms or workplaces</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reduce the number of people working in the same rooms per day by offsetting working hours on site and in combination with mobile work. Rearrange furniture and reduce number of seats.</td>
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<td>Third party access to workplaces (persons not belonging to the work area)</td>
<td>Specify and put up access regulations. Mark floor with required minimum distance markings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insufficient ventilation</td>
<td>Ventilate rooms regularly by opening windows (at least 10 min. per hour). Turn on technical ventilation systems (where available and if not centrally controlled). Do not use ventilators.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shared break rooms</td>
<td>Rearrange seating and schedule break times or provide additional space.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team work required</td>
<td>Keep a minimum distance of 1.5 m (4–5 steps). Set up fixed teams and rotate complete teams when working in shifts to prevent cross-infections between teams.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hazardous solo work</td>
<td>Also during the pandemic, hazardous work must not be done alone. Maintain minimum distance while working. Coordinate hazardous tasks with the leading occupational safety officer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business trips</td>
<td>Reduce business trips to a minimum. For more information, refer to section 3.9 of the hygiene concept of TU Darmstadt.</td>
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