

## Recommendations for operating Core Facilities in a research environment during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic:

### Preamble

Core facilities are shared scientific infrastructures. Users come from different departments or institutions to operate the same equipment and take advantage of scientific services provided by a limited number of facility staff. In this setting, transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus between individuals or from contaminated surfaces is facilitated. Therefore, core facilities deserve special attention from the research institutions' higher management.

As a group of experienced core facility leaders, we **strongly recommend ceasing all operations in core facilities, with highest priority to those requiring personal interaction**, and urge our colleagues to convince their institutions to follow this advice. Closure of the facility is the only measure that ensures users and staff safety. Even in regions with a low number of known infections, the time to act is now.

**The guidelines described below should help imaging core managers to protect themselves and their users a) if running the facility is made mandatory despite the current emergency, and b) for resuming operations in a post peak situation as safely as possible.**

### General organizational measures

- o Facility staff must wear protective respirators class FFP3, gloves, and goggles or face shields, users must wear protective surgical masks.
- o Put up signs at your doors stating that all touchable surfaces (keyboards, computer mice, eyepieces, focus knobs and the like) are possible means of transmitting SARS-CoV-2. Transmission through the eye (conjunctiva) is considered possible.
- o Cancel all face-to-face training, only online training is recommended
- o Only one user per microscope per session allowed
- o Users show up at the facility only after booking online. To minimize traffic, users do not walk in to see if a microscope is free.
- o Users who have been in risk areas or had contact with confirmed SARS-CoV-2 patients are not allowed to use the facility for 14 days. See RKI web site for current risk areas: [https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges\\_Coronavirus/Risikogebiete.html](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/Risikogebiete.html).
- o Users who are sick are not allowed to use the facility, even if it appears to be mild cold, with only a slight sneeze or cough or the like.
- o Providing shared lab coats by the facility is prohibited. Such lab coats must be removed. Users must bring and wear their own lab coats.
- o Consider to remove all plastic cups from the eye pieces (*Augenmuscheln*) to ease disinfection.
- o Make processing stations accessible remotely where possible, contact your IT about feasibility and resources
- o Ask software providers for possibilities of free temporary licenses for working at home
- o Consider if air flow in an out of the facility should be increased by building administration.
- o Be aware of current local restrictions and safety measures

### **Requested user behavior when entering the facility**

- o All users must wear fresh gloves. The gloves have to be disposed of after use. First step: put gloves on, last step: gloves off; disinfection in-between.
- o Do not touch bare surfaces with bare hands. That includes door handles, microscope parts and computer with periphery.
- o Cover keyboards, mice, eyepieces and other touchable surfaces with plastic wrap for household use (*Frischhaltefolie*) - see attached picture. Cheap products may perform badly, we recommend to use brand products.
- o Wipe the plastic wrap with 70% Ethanol or other recommended disinfectants (see <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/coronavirus-SARS-CoV-2-guidance-environmental-cleaning-non-healthcare-facilities.pdf>) before and after your slot or exchange the plastic wrap before your slot (always use gloves).
- o On eye pieces, use a new piece of plastic wrap for every user. When usage of plastic wrap on the eye pieces is not considered feasible (e.g. long-term observation through the eye pieces), be sure to disinfect the eye pieces before and after use.
- o All users are strongly encouraged to bring and wear their own safety glasses for further protection of their eyes against virus transmission
- o Do not start any overnight experiments which could become problematic if the campus should be closed the next morning. Contact the Core Facility staff do discuss overnight experiments.

See the following links for further information on Sars-CoV-2 (in German)

- o [https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges\\_Coronavirus/nCoV.html](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/nCoV.html)
- o [https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges\\_Coronavirus/Hygiene.html](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/Hygiene.html)

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Microscope eyepieces, touchscreen, computer keyboard and mouse wrapped in cling film, to create a disinfectable surface.