# COVID-19 safety plan for research teams at King’s University College[[1]](#footnote-2)

Use this template to document how your research team will keep team members and other people safe at your research spaces during the COVID-19 pandemic. [How to develop your COVID-19 safety plan: A guide for Ontario workplaces](https://www.ontario.ca/page/develop-your-covid-19-workplace-safety-plan) explains what you should think about and gives examples to help you come up with your plan.

## Research Team details

**Lead Researcher:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Department name**: Click or tap here to enter text.

**Date completed**:Click or tap here to enter text.

**Research Project (Title)**:Click or tap here to enter text.

**Date distributed**:Click or tap here to enter text.

**Revision date**:Click or tap here to enter text.

**Developed by**:Click or tap here to enter text.

Provide as much information in response to each question as possible. This will help your research assistants and other people to know exactly what to do and what to expect.

While this Safety Plan document merely collects information, creating and regularly reviewing these documents can be a useful exercise for each team. Creating these documents in a collaborative fashion will help ensure that everyone involved understand risks, are aware of the actions being taking to mitigate them, and can voice concerns in a constructive and focused manner.

The COVID-19 pandemic is an evolving situation – review your plan regularly and make changes as required. Refer to the Ontario government’s [COVID-19 website](https://covid-19.ontario.ca) for up-to-date information.

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## How will you ensure everyone involved with the research activities will know how to keep themselves safe from exposure to COVID-19?

Consider: What guidance will you need to provide? How will you share information? Do you need new or more frequent types of communication? Where will you update yourself on new COVID-19 guidance?

Example: Ensure our procedures are up to date by a daily review of Ministry of Health guidance.

Actions:

* [List your actions here. Note who is responsible for each action.]

## How will you screen for COVID-19?

Consider: How you will stay current about what symptoms to look for? Will you use a screening checklist? Who will do the screening? Who needs to be screened and how often?

Example: To find out if workers are well when they come to work, we will ask each worker basic questions about their physical health and symptoms using the provincial list of COVID-19 symptoms. <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/screen-covid-19-going-any-public-place>

Actions:

* [List your actions here. Note who is responsible for each action.]

## How will you control the risk of transmission in your research environments?

Include how you will maximize distance and separation, reduce transmission from surfaces and objects, and support good hand and respiratory hygiene.

Consider: What administrative controls will you use? How will you re-arrange, alter, or supplement physical spaces to make them safer? What changes will you make? Who needs to be in the research environments? How will you gather ideas about different ways of interacting?

Example: Only one member of the research team can use the research office with the shared computer at a time. To minimize potential spread of the virus to shared computer surfaces, a mask must be worn at all times in the office even though you are alone. Use of goggles or a faceshield is recommended to reduce the risk on inadvertantly touching your face while using shared equipment. The keyboard, desk, and chair must be disinfected after each use. The maximum time allowed in the office for any individual per day is 3 hours (including disinfecting time). The office must be left vacant for at least 30 minutes between different users. Office time will be booked using a shared Excel office schedule.

Actions:

* [List your actions here. Note who is responsible for each action.]

## What will you do if there is a potential case, or suspected exposure to, COVID-19 related to your research project?

Consider: What is the contact information for your local public health unit? What are your isolation procedures? How will you gather contact information for public health contact tracing? If participant confidentiality and/or anonymity are part of the study design, have contact tracing plans been reviewed and approved by King’s Research Ethics Review Committee? In order to preserve informed consent, how will participants be made aware of the contact tracing plans? Can participants be assured of confidentiality/anonymity if contact tracing is required by the health unit?

Example: All members of the research team must ‘clock-in’ and ‘clock-out’ of the research office using the shared Excel office schedule by ensuring that their name in listed in the schedule and that date, start-time, and end-time of the office appointment reflect the actual time spent in the office space. All members of the research team will provide the lead researcher a phone number and email address where they can be reached if contact tracing needs to be conducted by the local health authorities. This information will be treated as confidential by the lead researcher and only disclosed (as necessary) to duly appointed contact-tracers. The lead researcher will never provide one member’s contact information to another member, even if there is concern about possible exposure. Either the lead researcher will provide duly appointed contact-tracers that information or they will reach out to the member directly. Since all participant communications for this project will be virtual, no contact-tracing information should be kept for participants in order to preserve confidentiality and anonymity as outlined in the RERC approved study plan.

Actions:

* [List your actions here. Note who is responsible for each action.]

## How will you manage any new risks caused by changes to the way you conduct your research?

Consider: With team members, review existing critical risks and whether work practice changes will affect your current risk management strategy. Are any new risks introduced due to changes in team numbers or work practices? What new risk controls are required?

Example: We will establish regular check-ins with team members about how they’re coping with the change to virtual team meetings and the use of online collaboration tools.

Actions:

* [List your actions here. Note who is responsible for each action.]

## How will you make sure your plan is working?

Consider: How often will you schedule a review of your plan? How will you get input and ideas from team-members and participants? Who is responsible for evaluating how things are working and for adapting the plan as you find better/easier ways to do things? How will you communicate changes?

Example: The lead researcher will review this plan on the first Monday of each month to ensure it is still aligned with current directives, guidelines, and best-practices. The lead researcher will also conduct a review of the plan with each significant adjustment of public health directives (ex. any change of “colour” in Ontario). The team will add a standing agenda item to the start of our weekly team meetings dedicated to evaluating and improving the effectiveness of the current plan based on actual experiences in trying to abide by it. The team is committed to honest and prompt disclosure about failures to comply and is committed to taking a learning approach to such disclosure rather than a punitive or shame-inducing approach.

Actions:

* [List your actions here. Note who is responsible for each action.]

1. This template was adapted from a template provided by the Government of Ontario (accessed 2021.04.15): <https://www.ontario.ca/page/develop-your-covid-19-workplace-safety-plan>. The original template was modified to include King’s branding and minor revisions to wording were made to make the template more specific to King’s particular structure/operations as a post-secondary institution. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)