Safety Department Report – **September – December 2021**

**Biological News**

**COVID-19 information summary**

We appreciate that there is a large amount of COVID related information in the College’s webpages. Below is a list of direct links to COVID related topics that might help you find the relevant information.

[COVID -19 updates and guidance](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/covid-19), which contains links to other pages with more detailed information  about the use of face coverings, how to access COVID testing, returning to Campus information and specific guidance for students and staff.

[COVID-19 Safety Guidance, which contains links to the COVID safety policy, risk assessment, checklists and guidance.](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/safety/safety-by-topic/laboratory-safety/biological-safety/covid-19-guidance/keeping-you-safe---general-advice-for-everyone/testing-and-contact-tracing/)

[COVID-19 testing guidance for staff and students](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/covid-19/testing-scheme/), which contains links to the College asymptomatic [PCR testing](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/covid-19/testing-scheme/pcr-testing-scheme/) and [LFD testing](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/covid-19/testing-scheme/lfd-collect/request-covid-19-testing-kits/) schemes available to students and staff. If you are attending campus regularly and/or you lie in Halls of residence, you should take weekly tests. If you choose to take two LFD tests per week, please log your test results on the [NHS webpage](https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result) **and** on the COVID Rapid Testing reporting form on [MyImperial](https://my.imperial.ac.uk/COVIDRapidTesting/RapidTestReporting).

[Report COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test result](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/occupational-health/covid-19-contact-tracing-hub/student-information/) (students)

[Report COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test result](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/occupational-health/covid-19-contact-tracing-hub/staff-information/) (staff)

[Vaccination guidance](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/covid-19/students/arriving-in-the-uk/vaccination/), containing links to pop-up vaccination centres across London

[On Campus pop-up vaccination clinics](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/covid-19/students/arriving-in-the-uk/vaccination/centre/), containing information on how to book a free coronavirus vaccination at Imperial this October (at present this is only open to students).

[Vaccination status declaration](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/occupational-health/covid-19-contact-tracing-hub/close-contacts/), which contains information on self-isolation exemption for close contacts that have been fully vaccinated, and a link to the vaccination status form on MyImperial.

How to [request COVID-19 testing kits](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/covid-19/testing-scheme/lfd-collect/request-covid-19-testing-kits/) if you are running a College event or trip and you would like attendees to take a COVID-19 test.

**Laboratory News**

**Containment Level 3 Inspections**

The planned programme of Containment Level 3 facility inspections for 2021, which was affected by pandemic restrictions, will be completed at the end of September. Many thanks to the PIs, Suite and Lab Managers who have facilitated these inspections in difficult circumstances. An inspection programme for 2022 will be made available to end users and Faculty Safety teams in November.

Groups working in CL3 laboratories must ensure that monthly checks are being carried out as described in the Code of Practice. A key finding in these inspections has been that several groups rely on one person to carry out these checks and if they are absent, or leave the group, the monthly checks requirement can be forgotten. Principal investigators must ensure that these checks are carried out, and that more than one user is trained in how to complete the necessary processes.

**Radiation News**

**Radiation Protection Supervisor Training**

Radiation Protection Supervisor (RPS) training is being provided via MS Teams during the current Covid-19 restrictions. The next training course for new and existing RPSs will be provided on the 9th of December (1100 - 1230).  Training requests should be made via the [POD website](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/staff-development/safety-training/safety-courses-/radiation-protection-supervisor-training/).

**Technical News**

**Heavy metal sampling**

The Safety Department continue to offer swab sampling and analysis for heavy metals to all departments. The service can offer an insight into effectiveness of the controls that are in place in the lab and the associated cleaning protocols. The analysis can be done for a particular heavy metal or a full spectrum depending on the requirement.

If you would like to arrange the sampling or want to find out more please contact us at the Safety Department email address safetydept@imperial.ac.uk.

**Risk Assessments**

The Safety Department has been asked on a number of occasions to provide further guidance on undertaking risk assessments, and for clarification on what to do. We’ve now published some guidance on our website, alongside the existing COVID-19 risk assessment document, at <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/safety/safety-by-topic/laboratory-safety/biological-safety/covid-19-guidance/staff-guidance---safety-policies-and-checklists/>.

**Awards News**

**Provost’s awards for excellence in Health and Safety**

It was another tough year for the judges of the Provost’s awards for excellence in Health and Safety this year, and the individual award went to Ben Lancaster, Research Postgraduate in the Department of Chemistry. Ben was noted for showing outstanding safety leadership, consistently supporting his colleagues, challenging unsafe practices, and working with the Faculty of Natural Sciences’ (FoNS) Safety team to communicate procedures and protocols clearly. The team award was won by the Laboratory Management and Safety Team in the Department for Infectious Disease. You can read more about the awards by viewing the [press release](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/224633/prestigious-awards-honour-imperial-community/) on the Imperial College website.

**Safety Department News**

**Departmental Safety Officers**

The [Departmental Safety Officers](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/safety/who-we-are/local-safety-staff/) part of the website has still not been updated. Darran Hickey apologises, but thanks everyone for their comments and updates to these – they will be sorted imminently!

**New Starters**

Tim Budd joined the team as a new Biological Safety Officer in June. He joins us from the Francis Crick Institute.

Agnieszka Broda has also joined the Biological team as the new Trainee Biological Safety Officer. She was most recently a Research Associate in the Department for Infectious Diseases.

Mark Keeping has also joined the team as a new Radiation Protection Officer in July. He joins us from the Nuclear Reactor Team at Silwood.

We have one more imminent new starter, Mihaela Stevar, who will be the new Experimental Research Safety Officer, starting on 1 October. Mihaela is joining us from Queen Mary University of London, where she was a Health and Safety Adviser.

**College Safety Forum**

We are planning to hold our next College Safety Forum virtually again, most likely on Monday 6 December 2021. We will send out notice in due course, but if you do not currently receive emails on the Forum, please email Darran Hickey, and he will make sure you are notified!