



टाटा मूलभूत अनुसंधान संस्थान

TATA INSTITUTE OF FUNDAMENTAL RESEARCH

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Covid Third Wave: Precautions and Regulations to be followed in TIFR

(January 5, 2022)

We are in receipt of an OM from the DAE, No. 16/6/2020-SCS/Vol-VI/150 (**Annexure 1**), with which is enclosed an OM No. 11013/9/2014-Estt.-A-III dt. 03.01.2022 from the DoPT/GoI, imposing restrictions on attendance in Government offices till 31.01.2022. In view of the above, and noting the sharp increase in covid-positive cases within the TIFR community and in the city of Mumbai and its environs, the following rules and precautions are to be followed with immediate effect in order to ensure maximum safety of the community. These will remain valid till the issuance of further orders.

1. **Research and Academic Matters:** All research and academic matters which require the physical presence of personnel but are not of much urgency may be postponed to a later date at the discretion of the PI. This should not, however, affect the running of laboratories, workshops and the graduate programme in any major way. PI's are requested to postpone work orders for more long-term requirements, since the Technical Services will be facing a shortage of manpower.

All PIs may take note that if the current increase in covid-positive cases continues, there is every possibility of total/partial lockdown being imposed on Mumbai, in which case they will need to be prepared for further curtailment of their research and academic activities in laboratories and workshops.

2. **Administrative and Technical Work:** Likewise, administrative and technical work which are not of immediate urgency (e.g., stock-taking, weeding-out of files, cosmetic improvements, etc.) may be postponed to a later date at the discretion of the Section Head. However, essential services should not be affected.

Recruitment procedures may continue as usual. For this, to the maximum extent possible, the Homi Bhabha Auditorium should be used for written/skills tests and interviews should be conducted online (even if the candidate is in the Institute).

3. **Rostering and Work-from-Home provision:** All Section Heads and PIs will prepare a roster for the attendance of only such members whose physical presence in the Institute is needed for the work to proceed at a reasonable level. These rosters will be prepared with a view to reducing the congestion in laboratories, workshops and offices as far as possible.

The other members may avail the Work from Home provision mentioned in the DAE/DoPT orders. Such members will be considered to be on duty. However, if the Section Head/PI deems it necessary for an Institute member to come in person, and he/she fails to do so, then leave rules will be applied as per eligibility.

4. **Students & Visiting Fellows:** Students and Visiting Fellows who wish to leave the campus may do so with the permission of the PI/Research Supervisor, after informing the Department Chair and the Colaba Campus Life Committee. Such absence will not attract leave-without-pay provisions.

Visiting students and postdocs from other institutions are advised not to come to the campus on a regular basis unless specifically asked to do so by the PI/Research Supervisor. However, if their presence is considered necessary, they may come, provided they are fully vaccinated.

Day scholars should minimize their footfalls in the Institute without compromising their academic progress. They should be in touch with their respective PIs/Course Coordinators for advice regarding this.

The Graduate Schools may start considering how they would like to conduct their selections procedure for the GS 2022 batch and report their plans to the Dean, Graduate Studies by the end of the current month.

5. **Classes, Seminars and Colloquia:** All classes, except experimental coursework, should be moved online, irrespective of the number of students in the class. Experimental coursework should be carried out while maintaining all covid-protocols.

All seminars, colloquia and public lectures should be moved online without exception. All seminar and colloquium series should continue as far as possible.

6. **Meetings:** No in-person meetings should be held with more than 5 persons present. Larger meetings may be held in online/hybrid mode, provide there are not more than 5 persons present in any single room during the meeting. Serving of tea/coffee/snacks during in-person meetings will remain suspended. All are requested to bear with this inconvenience.

Larger meetings, involving outside personnel, which have been planned already and to which the Institute has already made a commitment, may be honoured with the following guidelines:

- a) the venue must be the Homi Bhabha Auditorium, with proper distancing in the seating arrangements;
- b) any tea/coffee/snacks etc. must be served in the North Pavilion, just outside the Auditorium Foyer, or in the Almond Grove;
- c) movement of large numbers of individuals inside the buildings is strongly discouraged.

No new proposals for large meetings involving non-TIFR persons will be approved till further notice. Recruitment processes will be exempt from this rule.

7. **Recreational facilities:** The gym will continue to operate, but only 4 persons in each room (other than trainers) will be allowed inside at a given time. Likewise, the badminton court may operate with not more than 4 persons inside at a given time. Outdoor recreational facilities which do not involve close bodily contact may continue as before, subject to the rules in Para 10 below.
8. **Visitors Programme and the Guest House:** The Visitors' Programme will remain suspended from January 10, 2022 till further notice. The Guest House will stop accepting bookings from this date onward. However, bookings which have been made earlier will be honoured, provided the visitors are informed prior to their arrival that the Guest House will also be used to provide isolation to a certain number of covid patients. Institute members are advised to gently persuade their visitors to postpone their visits unless they are of immediate necessity.
9. **Canteens:** The East and West Canteen, and the Jagadish Students' Canteen, will move immediately into 'safe mode'. This may imply reduction in the number of seating spaces, spreading out seats out-of-doors, a reduction in the menu, and other measures such as were introduced at earlier stages of the pandemic. All patrons are advised
 - a. to keep their face masks on at all times except when actually eating and/or drinking;
 - b. not to change the seating arrangements without permission of the canteen staff;
 - c. not to spend more time in the canteens than is strictly needed for meals/snacks.

Please note that lack of compliance among patrons may lead to closure or partial closure of the canteens, causing grave inconvenience to all Institute members.

10. **Covid-safety:** Inside the Institute premises, the standard precautions against covid-19 infection, e.g., wearing face masks fully covering nose and mouth, frequent hand sanitization, maintaining social distancing (*do gaz kee doori*), etc. shall remain in force.

In case of covid-19 infection, the **TIFR Covid SOP** shall remain in force.

Anyone who is symptomatic, or has received a covid-positive report for themselves or their families, are advised to report this *immediately* to the Medical Section. Failure to do so, especially if the individual is on campus, will attract punitive measures.

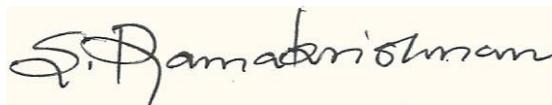
11. **Quarantine Rules:** As per the new rules issued by the BMC, the following protocol is prescribed for the Institute members and families staying in TIFR quarters.

- a. *Covid positive patients* who are advised home quarantine should remain in isolation for a period of **10 days** from the date of RT-PCR sample taken (which reported positive) or till 3 days have elapsed without fever, whichever is later. This period will not be counted as leave.
- b. *High-risk contacts of covid patients*, viz, those who share the same house, apartment, room, or work closely in the same office/laboratory/workshop, and have been in prolonged contact with the patient, should also remain in isolation for a period of **10 days** from the date of the patient being declared positive, irrespective of their vaccination status. During this period, they will be considered to be working from home.
- c. All high-risk contacts will have the option of getting RT-PCR tested on the 6th or 7th day, and if found negative, may be released from quarantine from the 8th day onward. Such RT-PCR tests will be at the individual's own expense. Students, however, may charge it to their Contingency Grant.
- d. *TIFR employees* in either of the above categories will be counted as covid patients or high-risk contacts only if endorsed by the Medical Section, failing which, their absence will be counted as leave as per eligibility.
- e. *Post-travel quarantine:* Individuals who are fully vaccinated will not require to quarantine after domestic travel, unless they fall under categories a) or b) above. However, for those who are not vaccinated, or partially vaccinated, or who return from international travel (even if fully vaccinated) a quarantine for 14 days is still mandated (since the BMC has not changed the rule). However, the exit option in c) above will be applicable for all such travellers.

The above rules will also be applicable to TIFR employees living outside of Institute quarters as individuals; however, for others living in the same house/apartment/room, the BMC Rules (**Annexure 2**) will apply.

12. **Vaccination:** All employees who have not done so yet, are advised to get themselves and their families fully vaccinated as soon as possible. Those who continue to remain unvaccinated or partially vaccinated, may eventually find their free movement inside the Institute premises severely restricted.

This supersedes all previous orders on the subject.



(S. Ramakrishnan)
Director

All Faculty, Staff, Post-docs and Students in Colaba