

EH&S Considerations for Working Safely on Campus during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Note: This document will be updated periodically by EH&S, UC Berkeley.

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Following are **considerations and actions** to help maintain a **safe and healthy workplace**. There is a summary **checklist** at the conclusion of this guidance.

EXPOSURE ASSESSMENT

Daily each morning, all employees should use the following simple self-screening process to lessen the community spread of COVID-19:

- Take your temperature. Do you currently, or have you in the last 24 hours, had a fever (subjective or measured), cough, shortness of breath and/or sore throat? If you have any of these symptoms or if you have a recorded temperature of greater than 100.4 degrees, you should stay home and work with your supervisor/manager on telework and leave options. If feasible, please continue to check for symptoms throughout the day. If symptoms develop, tell your supervisor and go home immediately.
- If you have come in close contact (within 6 feet) of someone who is symptomatic with COVID-19 during a period from 48 hours before symptoms onset until meets criteria for [discontinuing home isolation](#) you should self-isolate for 14 days while monitoring for symptoms. Essential employees may be able to continue working so long as they self-monitor and remain symptom-free. If you have questions about your exposure, you should speak to your primary care clinician or call the **Occupational Health hotline at 510-332-7192 for additional assistance**.

CLEANING & DISINFECTION

The health of occupants or visitors who may have been in the building prior to or during closure is unknown, as is the potential for surface contamination. However, the CDC (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention) advises that if the workplace has been unoccupied for more than 7 days, it will only need normal routine cleaning at the time of reopening. This is because the virus that causes COVID-19 has not been shown to survive on surfaces longer than this time.

Facilities Services custodians continue to use approved chemical disinfectants to disinfect high touch point surfaces on campus including: classroom student and instructor desks and podiums, conference room tables and armrests on chairs, door handles, drinking fountains, elevator call buttons and elevator panels, furniture in public spaces, handrails for stairs, light switches, braille signage, drinking fountains, etc.

Custodians for RSSP are similarly disinfecting surfaces including: bathrooms, showers, toilets, partitions, sink counters, faucets, light switches, door handles, glass doors, hard floors, common areas and meeting space tables and chairs, elevator buttons, interior and exterior

entrance doors, exercise rooms and equipment, and common area kitchenettes. Some office door handles, and table tops, are also being cleaned and disinfected.

Departments & Employees should take responsibility for disinfection efforts in their personal work spaces and common areas. Wear disposable gloves, and disinfect all common surfaces, including door handles, bathroom stall handles, sink handles, countertops, keyboards, and other shared equipment. Use of pre-moistened disinfectant wipes, or wiping with paper towels and 70% alcohol (5 min contact to kill virus), or diluted Clorox (4 tsp. per quart, 1 min contact to kill virus) and similar bleach products, are acceptable protocols. Change your gloves for a clean pair often, and dispose of gloves by turning them inside out as you remove them; discard in a trash can then wash your hands. Remember that your actions can contaminate surfaces, too. Leave them clean and disinfected before you leave work.

If you have concerns about building disinfection, contact your building manager/coordinator, or EH&S.

Please reference additional CDC workplace cleaning and disinfecting guidance [here](#).

MAINTAIN GOOD PERSONAL HYGIENE HABITS

Stay home if you're not feeling well. Follow health authority guidance on mask use. Continue to wash hands frequently, avoid touching your face, mouth and eyes with unclean hands. Cough and sneeze into your elbow and away from others. Limit physical contact with others and continue physical distancing whenever practical.

WORK ARRANGEMENTS

Campus department PIs and supervisors will have to make their own assessments with regards to physical distancing. Many workstations may already provide reasonable distancing (at least 6 feet), but meetings in smaller conference rooms should be avoided. Decide if face-to-face meetings are the best option, or if other tools are available such as video or phone conferencing that allow employees to remain at their workstations or call in from alternate work locations, or a combination of those options.

Department supervisors may also consider rotating or staggering employee work schedules in order to allow space for social distancing in smaller groups. Consider lower occupancy limits for common-use areas such as break rooms, conference rooms, and even restrooms to maintain physical distancing to the extent feasible. It is necessary to use face coverings when a person is not alone in their individual office.

Employees who feel they have a need for an accommodation due to health reasons should speak with their supervisor about those needs and/or contact the HR business partner assigned to their department. Employees can also contact Disability Management Services to have a confidential discussion regarding their health and concerns about returning to work.

FALLING ILL UPON RETURNING TO WORK

If you develop physical symptoms associated with COVID-19 after returning to work (fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, or flu-like symptoms), please do the following:

1. If you are at work, isolate yourself and maintain at least 6 feet distance from others; wear face coverings and notify your supervisor (using phone or computer) and go home.
2. If your symptoms are mild: call the UC Berkeley **Occupational Health COVID hotline at 510-332-7192 from 10am-4pm** for assessment and instructions. See [here](#) for up to date UHS COVID information.
3. If symptoms are more than just minimal, please call your own primary care provider for advice or go directly to the nearest hospital emergency room. You can also call Occupational Health as above for testing if advised by your primary care clinician.
4. Notify Occupational Health in the event of a positive test result.

Occupational Health does not have capacity to care for staff who are seriously ill or who have non-work related conditions: please do not call for non-COVID conditions unless work-related.

EH&S will be advised of the positive test result via the supervisor, or by the Employee First Report application (EFR), or by Occupational Health, and will then arrange for appropriate disinfection service at the work location(s). *The supervisor will be responsible for reporting the potential exposure of co-workers to appropriate managers for broader notification to coworkers as appropriate.* Privacy of the sick individual shall be maintained per privacy protocols.

EH&S will be responsible for any notifications to Cal/OSHA if it is alleged that the illness was initiated at work. EH&S can assist departments and supervisors with illness investigations and appropriate workplace actions after learning of a symptomatic coworker. **Call EH&S at 510-642-3073.** Actions will be on a case-by-case basis and may include the following:

- Interview with the ill employee and their supervisor
- Consultation with Disability Management and Occupational Health
- Isolation recommendations for the impacted work location(s)
- Cleaning and disinfecting procedures by custodial services other service providers

FOOD & CHEMICAL EXPIRATIONS

Be sure to check the expiration dates of food and chemicals in the workplace and discard expired products. Date labels on food products are not always indicative of food spoilage, but “when in doubt throw it out.” Check chemical container integrity and look for any leaks.

PESTS

Campus buildings are subject to pest invasions, especially when buildings have been unoccupied. Look for signs of pest activity in the workplace, including rodent droppings on floors, desks, and in cabinets, gnawed foods, and shredded papers; cockroaches and ants are possible invaders, as well as are pantry moths, fruit flies and wasps. If you have pest concerns that require assistance, contact campus **Facilities Services at 510-642-1032**.

DRINKING FOUNTAINS & SINKS

Water stagnation during extended breaks can result in changes to color, taste, odors, and turbidity. Usually these are resolved when normal water flow returns to the building. It's a good idea to let water run for a minute from drinking fountains, bottle fillers, or sink taps before using it for consumption. Water quality issues can be reported to EH&S. Using personal water bottles and obtaining water from refillable water bottle stations (hydration stations) is a better option over drinking water directly from fountain spigots.

MOLD & MOISTURE

Water leaks from pipes or leaky windows could have occurred while spaces were left unoccupied. Look for evidence of water intrusion, staining, mold growth or mold odors, and report it to your building manager, or to **Facilities Services at 510-642-1032**.

INDOOR AIR QUALITY

Building ventilation during the closure was likely not interrupted, but this is uncertain. Unusual odors can result when a building has not had fresh air introduced in a while, either by building mechanical systems or openable windows. Most indoor air quality (IAQ) problems are resolved when HVAC systems are restored, or windows opened, to allow fresh air to dilute anything that may have built up during the closure. Another common contributor to odors is dried-out p-traps in floor drains and sink drains. This problem is easily resolved by pouring water into the drains to fill the p-trap again. If you experience any significant IAQ issues upon return, please call **EH&S at 510-642-3073**.

PPE CONSIDERATIONS

The [CDC](#) provides the most up-to-date information on coronavirus and personal protection. Consider that supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) like masks and gloves are likely to remain in short supply for several months. Priority use of PPE should go toward healthcare professionals and other campus workers who have occupational exposure risks.

Face Masks: The CDC currently recommends the use of face masks while out in public, and some local health authorities have required face coverings in public areas, essential businesses, and on public transportation. Any face covering that covers the mouth and nose is acceptable for general public use, especially cloth masks that can be laundered and reused. Keep in mind that the goal of a face mask in this case is to avoid spreading respiratory droplets generated by infectious persons. It is one part of a multi-point strategy to limit exposure, including physical distancing, coughing and sneezing into the

Return to Work Checklist

PERSONAL HEALTH & HYGIENE:

- Employees are screened to ensure they are in good health and do NOT exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 infection including: fever, cough, shortness of breath, and other flu-like symptoms.
- Clean face masks are available for each employee, or brought from home
- Hand sanitizers and sinks with soap and water are readily available
- Employees are reminded to:
 - Wash hands frequently with soap and water, or use hand sanitizers
 - Avoid touching face
 - Maintain 6-ft physical distancing as much as possible
- Avoid using drinking fountain spigots. Fill your own water bottle at hydration station bottle fillers instead, or bring water from home.

WORKPLACE CONDITIONS:

- Work shifts are staggered to improve social distancing
- Workstations are spaced more than 6-ft apart where practical
- Where employees interact with each other, visitors or vendors, physical distancing measures or barriers are used in addition to use of face coverings
- Disinfecting wipes or spray bottles are available; employees are reminded to use them to disinfect hard surfaces in their environment that are frequently touched.
- Employees are reminded to advise their supervisor if they feel sick.
- Windows are open or building mechanical ventilation is running to provide good ventilation of the work area
- The workplace has been inspected for signs of
 - Water intrusion
 - Leaks or spills
 - Expired food and chemicals
 - Pest activity

LABORATORY FACILITIES:

The following additional conditions should be evaluated upon return to work:

- Fume hoods are operational; magnehelics show proper flow rates
- Eye wash stations and showers have been inspected
- Floor sinks, benchtop sinks, hood sinks, and warewash sinks have water in the p-traps
- Chemical containers are not leaking

Please report any facilities concerns to Facilities Services at 510-642-1032. Indoor air quality concerns can be reported to EH&S at 510-642-3073.