

Introduction

The safety and well-being of our faculty, staff, and students is central to our efforts to prepare the campus to return to on-site-work. As we work together to create an environment that minimizes the spread of COVID-19, it will allow the university community to return to campus feeling safe and confident in their learning and work environment. To assist in this effort, the Facilities & Services Health and Safety Response Team has been established to deliver solutions to units through in-person and virtual consultations that address immediate and ongoing social distancing and space concerns. The team is made up of experts in operations and maintenance, safety, engineering, and building code compliance. Members will monitor suggested guidance on the virus and be available to assist campus leadership as we develop safety protocols and prepare to return to our mission-critical work through teaching, research, public engagement, and economic development.

If you have questions or require an in-person consultation to address your social distancing concerns, please send an email to covid19fsconsulting@illinois.edu.

Space Utilization and Social Distancing

Social distancing is deliberately increasing the physical space between people to avoid spreading illness. Staying at least 6 feet, or about 2 arms lengths, away from other people reduces the chances of catching COVID-19. This can be accomplished through a variety of means including limiting occupancy loads, establishing visual cues, creating barriers and partitions, and controlling traffic flows. When those controls are ineffective or infeasible, a mask should be worn. There is not a perfect solution for every space across campus but here are some examples and solutions to consider when making alterations within your building:

Shared Office Space/Cubicle Farms

- Rearrange furniture such that there is a minimum of 6 feet of separation between persons. This would translate into an area of about 100 square feet being allocated for each person working in the area that does not have an enclosed office or cubicle with tall walls. This value provides some additional space for circulation and clearance for fixed furnishings. The minimum square footage required to accommodate the six feet of separation is approximately 44 square feet. This value can be applied without separation barriers if the employee is expected to work from a single fixed position. Some furniture may have to be removed and stored to accomplish an appropriate separation distance. When 6 feet of separation cannot be achieved, install partitions and separation barriers to create physical barriers between occupants. Partitions and barriers should be provided for a physical separation while occupants are seated, standing, and performing normal work tasks about their workstation. Separation barriers are recommended for desks with no or low cube walls.
- Sit-to-stand desks should not be used in the stand-position if the top of the users head extends above the top of a partition or barrier if the partition or barrier is used in lieu of social distancing (100 square feet).
- Temporarily repurpose small conference rooms and other shared spaces into individual office space if needed to achieve social distancing.
- Reduce occupant loads by continuing remote work for employees that can work from home and/or establishing shift work.

Entrances, Lobbies, and Circulation Areas

- Restrict access to buildings to only those assigned to the building, are required to be in the building to perform work (e.g., construction and maintenance activities), are making deliveries, or have appointments.

- Interior doors in a heavily traveled area (excluding fire doors) can be propped open to facilitate access without touching the door hardware. If you are not certain that the door is a fire door, you can check the edge of the door for a fire door label, or contact Craig Grant at (217) 493-4036.
- The use of floor markings to direct travel into and through narrow (less than 9 feet wide) hallways, office areas, and stairwells in a one-way flow may help to keep persons from passing each other in closer proximity. The use of face coverings will still be required when traveling through these areas. If one-way stairwell designations are to be undertaken, it is required that all departments assigned to the building agree with the designation and have confirmed their agreement in writing before the designations are made or any signage installed. The designation of the stairs as one-way flow will also require that the employees of the building be informed that the stairwell directional designation is for non-emergency conditions only. They must be informed that in an emergency, occupants should use the closest exit to evacuate the building. This caveat must also be noted on the stairwell directional signage.
- Wide (greater than 9 feet wide) hallways and office areas can use floor markings to maintain distancing between the opposing traffic flows.

Reception Areas, Cashier Stations, and Similar Spaces

- Restrict access to reception and similar areas to only those people with appointments.
- Mark floors at 6-foot intervals in areas where lines are anticipated.
- Mark floors or use tables to establish appropriate separation distances.
- Install separation barriers at reception, cashier, and other similar work locations.
- Utilize prepay and electronic only payments to avoid close contact with customers. High-touch payment devices will need to be disinfected frequently.
- Require the wearing of a mask by visitors/customers.

Break Rooms, Kitchenettes, and Office Coffee Stations

- The use of break rooms, coffee stations, shared kitchen refrigerators and dining areas create situations where the social distancing and cleaning recommendations cannot be met. These areas are recommended to be temporarily closed. Employees are encouraged to bring their lunch from home and consume it at their workspace or outside.

Conference/Meeting Rooms

- Continue to utilize virtual meetings whenever possible to maintain social distancing.
- If an in-person meeting is necessary, arrange the space so there is enough room for each person in attendance to maintain 6 feet of separation from all other attendees and all attendees should wear a mask. Allow those whose physical presence is not necessary to call-in. Furniture used during the meeting should be disinfected at the end of the meeting.

Elevators

- Encourage stair usage for those who have the ability to use them.
- Masks must be worn in public spaces including elevators.
- Limit elevator capacity to two occupants with occupants positioned in opposite corners (e.g., front right and back left corners).
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after pushing buttons or use pencils, pens and other objects to push buttons.

- Be mindful of distancing between those who are waiting for an elevator and those passing by the elevator.

Laboratories

- It is recognized that laboratories are special use locations with unique needs and requirements.
- General social distancing guidelines along with the wearing of masks are recommended in laboratory spaces.
- For guidance in laboratories and research-specific spaces DRS should be contacted at <https://drs.illinois.edu>.

Restrooms

- Users must take personal responsibility to practice social distancing to the best of their abilities while using the restroom knowing that not all restrooms are designed to accommodate social distancing.
- Masks should be worn in all restrooms at all times except to wash one's face.
- Consultations can be performed on a case-by-case basis if there are specific concerns.

University Vehicles

- If possible, travel should be limited to one person per vehicle.
- In high-occupancy vehicles such as vans and buses, occupants should sit in alternating seats and/or rows.
- If there is more than one occupant in the vehicle, masks are required and social distancing should still be practiced to the extent feasible.
- When driving alone, masks are advised but not required.
- Shared use vehicles shall be sanitized before use and upon completion of use by the user(s). Contact covid19cleaning@illinois.edu for advice on appropriate cleaning supplies.

Communication and Signage

- The COVID-19: Executive Steering Committee on Return to On-Campus Operations has enlisted a group that includes Facilities & Services, Public Affairs, Strategic Marketing & Branding, Student Affairs and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation to design and produce consistent signage for public spaces.
- F&S will be posting signs at building entrances, elevators, and restrooms to reinforce social distancing, mask use, hand hygiene, and elevator use. Units will not need to pay for these and F&S will be responsible for installation.
- The signage group will provide digital sign designs with messages we anticipate units might want to share, as well as a digital template that can be tailored with unit specific messages. All of these will be available in a virtual library for units to print and hang themselves. Versions for display on digital signs will be available for units as well. A separate communication with information on where to access the library will be distributed to this group.
- Frequently communicate, through verbal and electronic communications, expectations for social distancing, mask use, hygiene, and other unit-specific protocols.

Personal Awareness and Responsibility

- Be aware of and respect other people's personal space.
- Avoid direct physical contact with other people. Do not shake hands, high-five, or engage in other person-to-person contact unless necessary (e.g., medical emergency).

- Frequently practice proper hand hygiene.
- Clean and disinfect personal workstations on a regular basis. Contact covid19cleaning@illinois.edu for advice on appropriate cleaning supplies.
- Campus is supplying two washable masks for each employee returning to campus by August 16, 2020. Masks are being distributed by the Illinois Fire Services Institute. Unit liaisons will receive information in a separate communication on how to request masks for their employees.
- Employees should wear a face covering or mask while in campus facilities unless they are alone in their office with the door closed.
- Employees are responsible for the proper care and wearing of their masks. However, a respirator must be worn (in place of a face covering or mask) for tasks where a job hazard assessment has determined a respirator is required. More information regarding cloth face coverings, including washing instructions and directions on how to make your own masks, is available on the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>.
- Lead by example and kindly remind others of expectations and their responsibilities.

(Updated 6/1/2020)