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Guidelines and Resources for returning to on-campus work
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LOOKING AHEAD

Thank you for your individual and collective efforts in support of the mission of Penn State in these challenging circumstances. We are proud of the tremendous resilience you have demonstrated as the University rapidly and successfully transitioned to remote teaching and work.

Our top priority, at all times, is to provide a safe and healthy working and learning environment for faculty, staff, and students. This guide is intended to inform and assist you as we begin the slow and deliberate process of returning. Our return will be in phases, informed by public health guidelines. We are working closely with local and state authorities as well to meet and, where possible, exceed their requirements.

Even though the Pennsylvania stay-at-home orders are lifted, and most counties are moving to the green phase, the State of Pennsylvania and Department of Health still have restrictions on businesses reopening to pre-COVID operations, so we will be thoughtful in our return to campus. We will not immediately return to standard operations that were in place before on-campus buildings were closed and employees who could work remotely were instructed to do so.

As you know, this is a rapidly changing situation, and our guidance will likely change considerably during the coming months as we move into the fall semester and learn more about the virus. We will provide frequent updates as the situation warrants.

Each of us has an important role to play in keeping the Penn State community safe and healthy. Adherence to these guidelines is vital. Please check the University’s Coronavirus Information Website regularly for updates. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we begin the gradual transition back to campus. Thank you again for all you do for Penn State, and welcome back!

Image: Nathaniel C. Sheetz
A Phased Return

With health and safety foremost in mind, we will undertake a phased return to on-campus work. The planning process has been sensitive to the different needs and concerns of our community, and we will be flexible in adapting to changing public health concerns and requirements. The current environment has caused many to feel overwhelmed or anxious. If you are expected to return to campus but feel unsafe doing so, please discuss this with your supervisor. We will monitor implementation along the way, taking note of anything that helps us meet immediate needs in the next phase, anticipating and addressing challenges, and modifying scenarios as necessary.

The University's COVID-19 task forces are overseeing development of plans for the restoration of research, teaching, working and student life. Academic and administrative units across individual campuses will develop plans specific to their functions, aligned with those of the leadership teams authorized by unit executives. This is a community effort across the commonwealth, and our success depends on everyone; your continued cooperation with managers and supervisors will be crucial in executing these plans.

Especially in the early days, we will limit the number of individuals on campus. Our phased approach will be as follows:

- **Phase 0**: Continue mission-critical functions and research activities. All employees who can work remotely will do so.
- **Phase 1**: Remote work continues where possible. Critical on-site administration and operations necessary to support teaching and students begins to return to campuses. Review those functions that cannot be done remotely and begin to return them to campus.
- **Phase 2**: Remote work continues where possible. Supervisors establish staged work schedules that may allow for additional employees to return.
A Safe Workplace

ACCESS TO WORK AREAS

Limiting the density of our on-campus population reduces the chances of incidental contact that spreads illness. To further reduce the chances of exposure, we are developing protocols to limit public access to campus buildings. We strongly encourage departments to continue to engage with visitors remotely whenever possible. Please ensure you have your Penn State identification card with you at all times to permit your access to authorized facilities and to help us prevent unauthorized access to work areas.

AVOIDING CONGESTION: STAFFING OPTIONS

Supervisors should continue to encourage their staff to work remotely wherever that has proven to be productive and effective. Flexible individual and team schedules, such as staggered work arrival and departure times, should be implemented as we return to campus. If you require some flexibility, speak with your supervisor to develop a plan that achieves work goals and meets your needs.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING IN SHARED SPACES

The Office of the Physical Plant (OPP) and Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) have provided guidance regarding changes to workspaces and shared facilities to comply with physical distancing protocols. Each unit has a Facilities Coordinator for all academic and administrative buildings, who partners with OPP to discuss adjustments that need to be made to spaces, signage needs, and other visual cues that support proper physical distancing. These strategies must be instated in spaces such as break rooms, copy rooms, and storage areas. All of this requires a coordinated approach across the University and will involve adjustments not just to our shared spaces but also to staffing levels, individual behavior, and more. Please reach out to your supervisor for specific instructions or if you have questions.
CONDUCTING MEETINGS

As we resume our on-campus work, please continue to use remote-meeting technology tools whenever possible. If it is necessary to conduct a meeting in person, the number of attendees should be limited so that those present can sit a minimum of six feet apart with all participants wearing facial coverings. Others can join the meeting remotely, if necessary. All meetings should follow current University guidance on this topic.

MEALS IN THE WORKSPACE

For your own protection and to limit occasions of incidental contact, we suggest you bring meals from home during this uncertain time. Remember that communal food sharing has the potential to spread illness. And, as you do at home, practice good hygiene by washing your hands before eating, as well as cleaning and sanitizing your food preparation surfaces and high-touch areas. Face coverings are required when entering dining areas and shared kitchens on campus. We recommend using the hand-sanitizer stations provided throughout campus buildings or carrying a small bottle of hand-sanitizer with you if possible.
MONITORING YOURSELF FOR SYMPTOMS

It is crucial that we work together to mitigate risk for all. Every day before coming to work, please take a moment to monitor yourself for symptoms of COVID-19 or any other illness. If you have any of the symptoms listed below, you must stay home or leave work immediately if on campus, notify your supervisor, and contact Occupational Medicine at (814) 863-8492.

The information in the following sections on COVID-19 symptoms, risks, and precautions is based upon guidance provided on the [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention website](https://www.cdc.gov). We recommend that you seek further guidance from the resources posted on the [Penn State Return to Work Website](https://returntopennstate.psu.edu).

**SYMPTOMS TO CHECK FOR**

A variety of symptoms have been associated with COVID-19, and their impact has ranged from mild to severe. Some of these symptoms may appear 2–14 days after exposure to the virus:

- Fever above 100°F, or feeling unusually hot (if no thermometer is available), accompanied by shivering/chills
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Runny nose or new nasal congestion
- Difficulty breathing/shortness of breath
- Diarrhea, with or without respiratory symptoms
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Headache
- Generally feeling unwell, fatigue, and/or muscle aches
- New loss of taste or smell

This list is not comprehensive. As with any illness, please consult your medical provider if you are experiencing other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you. Do not report to work if you are not feeling well. [Penn State Absence Management](https://psaes.psu.edu) offers guidance for employees and supervisors related to COVID-19 and absences from work.

If you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, who is being tested for COVID-19, or who has concerning symptoms, you should stay home, notify your supervisor, and contact Occupational Medicine at (814) 863-8492. Staff who may have been exposed to the virus at work will be contacted by Penn State Occupational Medicine if they are identified as a close contact. OPP has specific protocol to properly clean and disinfect areas suspected of contamination with COVID-19 and will enact them as needed.
Stay Well: Health Practices for Individuals

- Stay home if you are sick or experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms.
- Wear a cloth face covering or mask in shared spaces at all times while on campus.
- Keep six feet away from others when you must go into a shared space (physical distancing).
- Wash hands frequently, or use alcohol-based (at least 60% alcohol) hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces including your keyboard, phone, and other items.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your inner elbow.
- Throw out used tissues immediately and wash your hands.

Higher-Risk Groups

According to the CDC, some groups are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

If you have an underlying health condition, or live with someone with an underlying health condition, and you believe you are at risk coming to campus, please discuss this with your supervisor, unit Human Resources strategic partner, or unit leadership so that we can address how to support you.

If you believe you have a disability that necessitates a reasonable accommodation or leave, contact the Affirmative Action Office or Absence Management, as appropriate.

Stay Masked-Stay Home-Stay Clean-Stay Apart-Stay Covered

Help our community stay well and decrease the spread of COVID-19. Make these behaviors part of your routine:

- Stay home if you are sick or experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms.
- Wear a cloth face covering or mask in shared spaces at all times while on campus.
- Keep six feet away from others when you must go into a shared space (physical distancing).
- Wash hands frequently, or use alcohol-based (at least 60% alcohol) hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces including your keyboard, phone, and other items.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your inner elbow.
- Throw out used tissues immediately and wash your hands.

Testing, Contact Tracing and Monitoring

The University is employing strategies to create an effective detection and management system for all campuses, including testing, contact tracing, and monitoring and reacting to trends in data at the community and national levels. The plan includes testing individuals before arrival on campus as well as daily testing throughout the semester. The contact tracing program will leverage and scale-up existing contact tracing protocols in place at the University. In addition, each campus will be monitored for localized health care capacity and community-level disease prevalence.

More detailed information about contact tracing may be found in this Penn State News story.
Stay Well: Health Practices for Individuals

HAND WASHING
Wash your hands with soap and water frequently for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with greater than 60% ethanol, or 70% isopropanol in healthcare settings, or when soap and water are not available.

MASKING
There is solid research that supports wearing masks to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus. That is why, as we return to on-campus work, all employees will be required to wear facial coverings or masks. Penn State acquired a supply of masks available for students and employees. You will be notified when these become available. Employees, students, and visitors are required to practice physical distancing and wear face masks/coverings at all times in campus buildings (e.g., must be worn in offices, classrooms, labs, hallways, stairways, etc.); outdoors when they cannot be physically distant from others; and whenever state or local laws require. Masks do not need to be worn when eating or drinking, when isolated in a private office or vehicle, or when use adversely affects an employee’s safety or health. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth when removing your mask, and wash your hands immediately before and after removal.

HOW TO WEAR A MASK
Cloth face coverings should meet the following criteria:
- Fit snugly but comfortably against the sides of the face and cover the nose, mouth, and chin
- Fasten securely with ties or ear loops
- Include multiple layers of fabric
- Allow for breathing without restriction
- Be able to be laundered without damage or change to shape

DISINFECTING YOUR WORKSPACE
OPP routinely cleans and disinfects all campus buildings in accordance with CDC guidelines. But we all need to do our part to wipe down personal work surfaces and commonly touched areas to stop the spread of illness and protect ourselves and others. Please use EPA approved disinfectants, following the manufacturer’s application procedures and referencing the safety data sheet for the associated hazards and required PPE. Regular cleaning decreases the amount of the virus that causes COVID-19 on surfaces and objects, which reduces the risk of exposure. You are urged to wipe down your workspace at the start and end of every work shift. Frequent cleaning of surfaces and objects touched by multiple people (e.g., tables, doorknobs, light switches, counter tops, handles, touch screens, printer/copiers, and coffee makers) is important. Risk of virus exposure occurs outside of the workspace as well. When at home or away from campus, we encourage you to continue practices such as thorough cleaning, hand washing, and physical distancing that will limit the chance of exposure.
Well-Being as We Transition

Penn State has an ongoing commitment to your well-being and health. Please remember there are resources available to support you during this time.

**EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)**
The EAP is a free resource that provides benefits-eligible employees and their family members with access to counseling and advising services for a variety of health-related needs.

**EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE FUND (EAF)**
The EAF is open to all Penn State employees and provides financial assistance to those facing a wide range of personal or family hardships who have no other sources of funds available. Employees may submit an application ([found on the EAF website](mailto:assistancefund@psu.edu)) via email to assistancefund@psu.edu.

**WELLNESS RESOURCES**
Health Advocate provides over 80 free courses, personal growth resources, and professional development training.

The Learning Resource Network provides hundreds of courses, including wellness modules on mindfulness, managing stress, and more.
**PENN STATE COVID-19 WEB RESOURCES**

**Penn State Coronavirus Information**
https://virusinfo.psu.edu/

**Human Resources COVID-19 web page**
https://hr.psu.edu/covid-19-coronavirus

**Return to Work website**
https://sites.psu.edu/returntowork/

**Back to State web page**
https://virusinfo.psu.edu/back-to-state

**Return to Research web page**
https://www.research.psu.edu/
COVID_return_research

**Environmental Health and Safety**
https://ehs.psu.edu/covid19

**Office of the Physical Plant**
https://www.opp.psu.edu/

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Human Resources Services**
(814) 865-1473

**Absence Management**
(814) 865-1782, absence@psu.edu

**Affirmative Action Office**
(814) 863-0471, aao@psu.edu

**OTHER COVID-19 WEB RESOURCES**

**Pennsylvania Department of Health**
https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx

**Center for Disease Control**