WORKPLACE SAFETY DURING COVID-19

As of 01/14/2021
OVERVIEW:
UNCG is implementing a phased return of employees to work on campus. This is a complex process and it will take a diligent, thoughtful, and detail-oriented effort by every UNCG employee to ensure we prepare our campus and protect each other.

This manual presents a range of vital COVID-19 safety protocols and processes for employees as this transition moves forward. These protocols have been developed by our staff and faculty, based on collaboration with the UNC System as well as state and national health and safety agencies. They have been constructed in close alignment with the latest CDC recommendations – [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/considerations.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/considerations.html) – for higher education and American College Health Association (ACHA) guidance – [https://www.acha.org/ACHA/Resources/Topics/2019_Novel_Coronavirus_2019-nCoV.aspx](https://www.acha.org/ACHA/Resources/Topics/2019_Novel_Coronavirus_2019-nCoV.aspx) – to develop strong, clear guidelines, secure necessary equipment and resources, and prepare our environment for our return.

All employees are expected to review, understand, and comply with the directives outlined here. We know that this situation will evolve, new knowledge will be created, and procedures and guidance will change. This content may be updated as necessary to reflect changing recommendations and policy. Please monitor your email and regularly review our COVID-19 website – [https://update.uncg.edu/return-to-work/](https://update.uncg.edu/return-to-work/) – specifically the “Return to Work” section for the latest information.

BACKGROUND:
COVID-19 is a severe respiratory illness caused by a coronavirus. It is characterized by cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, and/or at least two of the following symptoms: fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, and/or new loss of taste or smell. It is believed to be spread through close contact with an infected person (through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes). It may also be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Knowing the facts and how to protect yourself is critical to help avoid infection.

*Understanding how to minimize disease spread:*
“Our health and safety upon return is dependent on a community effort made up of thousands of individual actions and decisions. The primary way COVID-19 spreads is from person-to-person contact. That means our best hope of preventing its spread is by changing the way we behave so that we make it that much harder for the virus to infect others.”

- Chancellor Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr.

UPHOLD COMMUNITY STANDARDS AND PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

You’ve likely heard many people say, “We’re all in this together.” What does that really mean? COVID-19 is a communicable disease. The primary way it spreads is from person-to-person contact. That means our best hope of preventing its spread is by changing the way we behave so that we make it that much harder for the virus to infect others. Keeping each other safe is a shared responsibility.

Some people in our community are particularly at risk of both getting COVID-19 and experiencing complications from it. Part of being a member of the UNCG community is being respectful and supportive of others. Being part of the Spartan community means that we acknowledge that our actions – if not thoughtful and considerate – can put other people at risk. So, we must have common community standards that help each of us, and our community, to stay healthy and safe.

We strive to create a working and learning environment that is safe and accessible to all. We expect all of our employees to do their part in this by following the protocols described within this document.
MAINTAIN PERSONAL HYGIENE:
- All employees must cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use the inside of your elbow and avoid touching your face and eyes with your hands.
- Wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap.
- At minimum, wash hands:
  - After using the restroom
  - Before and after eating
  - After blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Follow proper hand-washing techniques – here is an example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnJ1wV1lcb
- If soap and water are not immediately available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least ≥ 60% alcohol.
- Stay home when you are sick and notify your supervisor.

MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING:
Avoid close contact (maintain distancing of at least 6 feet) with other individuals, handshaking, or gatherings of more than ten people.
- Utilize teleconferencing such as Zoom, GoToMeeting, Google Hangout Meet, etc., if unable to space people at least 6 feet or more apart for in-person meetings.
- Establish a limit of one individual per vehicle. Special arrangements should be put into place if this cannot be accomplished (staggering shifts/tasks and/or using personal vehicles).
- Provide visible guides, such as floor tape or rearranging/removing furniture, posting signs, encouraging physical distancing in employee gathering areas (break room, common areas, mailroom, etc.).
- Avoid sharing tools, phones, desks, and other objects/equipment in the workplace. If this is unavoidable, work with your supervisor to develop a hard surface cleaning procedure prior to use.
- Supervisors should evaluate alternative work arrangements for individuals that need to share workspaces where possible (i.e., rotate individuals coming to campus, stagger start/stop times and break).
- Do not congregate in work rooms, pantries, copier rooms, or other areas where people socialize.
- Eat at your desk or away from others. Bring your lunch and try to pack items that do not need to be stored in a common refrigerator.
- Encourage community members and non-members to request information and materials or place orders via phone and e-mail to minimize person-to-person contact. When items or materials must be collected in person, have them ready for fast pick-up or delivery.
- Use only your knuckle or elbow to touch light switches, elevator buttons, etc.

WEAR FACE COVERINGS:
Employees are required to wear a face covering or mask (disposable and reusable) in situations where it is not possible to maintain 6 feet of social distancing from members of the public or co-workers. Face coverings will be supplied to UNCG departments upon request. Homemade face coverings may be used as long as they cover the nose and mouth and meet the guidance outlined by the CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html
- Employees are required to wear a face covering that covers the nose and mouth whenever they are unable to maintain a minimum of 6 feet of physical distancing.
- Employees are required to wear face coverings while on campus when interacting with or near others such as in hallways, stairwells, elevators, restrooms, kitchens, and when sharing a vehicle and/or riding a Spartan Chariot.
- Even when 6 feet of physical distance can be maintained, it is still encouraged that face coverings be used in order to minimize the spread of germs to others.
- Everyone on campus should carry a face covering while on campus even if not actively wearing it so they are prepared should their situation change.
- Be sure to follow proper donning (putting on) and doffing (taking off) of face coverings as demonstrated in this video: https://youtube.be/o_k7V8V3cw
- Proper use and care guidance of face coverings can be found here: UNCG Face Covering Guidance: https://go.uncg.edu/facecoverings
GLOVES:
Gloves are recommended only for those high-risk employees who will have direct contact with COVID-19 positive or suspect cases. Hand hygiene is the preferred method of protection from touching of frequently-touched surfaces or materials like mail, paper, cardboard, etc.: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/essential-goods-services.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/essential-goods-services.html)

Groups that have high-frequency touching of mail and packages may consider gloves in addition to hand hygiene practices. A limited number of gloves are available centrally and can be requested through supervisors. Gloves are still widely in stock and groups who are approved for glove use should consider purchasing through traditional methods including e-procurement.

- Gloves are only required for certain groups on campus who directly contact others or large amounts of paper books or items that are from the general public.
- Hand hygiene with sanitizer or soap and water is the preferred protection method related to virus transfer.
- Ensure integrity of gloves when putting on – discard gloves if they are ripped, torn, or otherwise compromised.
- **DO NOT RE-USE GLOVES!** Re-using gloves could lead to the spread of germs to your hands from the worn gloves. Treat all worn gloves as if they are potentially contaminated!
- Properly remove gloves to reduce the transmission of the COVID-19 virus to your hands and wrists.
- Discard gloves into the trash immediately upon removing.
- Wash your hands with soap and water (or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) immediately after removing gloves to reduce the risk of indirect transmission to your face (mouth, nose, and eyes) from potentially contaminated hands.
- Watch this video for tips on how to properly remove your gloves: [https://youtu.be/3I_kKVNrEMo](https://youtu.be/3I_kKVNrEMo)

HAND SANITIZER:
Hand sanitizing products will be installed in all University buildings near the main entrances of these facilities as a minimum. As a general rule, any hand sanitizer that is at least 60% and no more than 80% alcohol is considered adequate. Hand sanitizers are in short supply at present and they will not be provided for every office. If your department has a need for hand sanitizer in their office suites or other locations, it can be requested through Environmental Health and Safety. Employees are encouraged to use traditional hand washing as it is a more effective method of ensuring protection from COVID-19. Departments are also encouraged to continue to look for disposable hand sanitizer stock through the e-procurement system and traditional methods: [www.cdc.gov/handwashing/hand-sanitizer-use.html](http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/hand-sanitizer-use.html)

WORKSPACE MODIFICATION:
Protective equipment and barriers should be the last line of defense to reducing transmission. Plexiglass sneeze guards may be needed in some situations where routine personal interactions cannot be avoided, such as cashiers and check-in desks. Priority should be given to maximizing distancing, wearing face coverings, practicing good hand hygiene, and reducing common touch points. Every work area should be evaluated and reorganized, where feasible, to meet these priorities. Consider whether your work area can be reorganized to:

- Maximize distance between employee workstations and between employees and customers.
- Consider the physical barriers which are in place such as doorways or cubicle walls.
- Consider establishing temporary barriers such as rolling whiteboards and sealing openings between cubicles.
- Where there are no barriers, but the appropriate distance exists, consider placing a visual reminder to maintain social distance.
- With campus buildings largely unoccupied, consider moving some staff to alternative rooms.
- Direct traffic through entries and exits where hand sanitizer stations have been installed.
- Prop open interior doors that are not fire doors.
- Limit or eliminate the need to exchange items (have customers swipe their own card).
- Place trash cans inside bathroom doors to accommodate the use of paper towels to open doors.
DEPARTMENTAL CLEANING:
UNCG Facilities Services and Housing and Residence Life have implemented enhanced cleaning protocols at this time, including more frequent cleaning in common areas, rest rooms, and on high-touch surfaces. They are actively helping to prevent the spread of illness.

The UNCG Enhanced Cleaning Plan includes:
- Disinfect high-touch surfaces multiple times per day in public areas, including door knobs/handles, elevator call buttons, door push-plates, stairway railings, etc.
- Use electrostatic spray disinfectant periodically in common areas or upon request.
- Increase classroom surface cleaning and disinfection from daily to multiple times per day as allowed by class schedule.
- Restroom disinfection multiple times per day by adding disinfecting to normal bathroom checks. Increase use of machine-aided cleaning system (Ki-vac) in heavily used restrooms.
- Increased cleaning and disinfection of offices in cooperation with occupants and building contacts.

Cleaning supplies such as wipes, disinfectant, etc., should be purchased by the department or college to supplement campus-provided stocks as needed.

All employees are expected to do their part to assist with preventing the spread of COVID-19:
- Reduce the number of common touch points; for example, leave internal doors (non-fire and non-alarmed doors) propped open when possible.
- Using available supplies, clean and disinfect the following:
  - Their work area (as defined by supervisor) at the start and end of each work day.
  - Their work vehicle at the start and end of each shift (or before and after each use if the vehicle is shared).
  - Tools/equipment at the start and end of each shift (or after each use if the items are shared)
- DO NOT bring personal cleaning products to work with the exception of personal hand sanitizer and wipes.


Notify your supervisor or contact EHS directly (336) 334-4357 if you have any questions or concerns.
CENTRAL SUPPLY OF PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND CLEANING MATERIALS:
Protective equipment and some cleaning supplies will be centrally stocked and distributed on campus. Requests for supplies should be submitted on a department level through the department’s COVID-19 Planning and Coordination Liaison using the COVID-19 Return to Work portal. Department or Lab supplies that departments used on a regular basis prior to COVID-19 arrival such as standard gloves, lab coats, eye protection, etc., and/or any specialized supplies/materials should continue to be purchased by the department.

To preserve campus supplies, initial requests should include only your department personnel and activity levels anticipated during phase 2 of reopening.

When your request is received, you will be notified whether your supplies will be delivered to your location or if a department representative will need to pick them up from a campus distribution location.

SNEEZE GUARDS:
Sneeze guards should be considered only for areas where there is a large volume of public interface. Since co-workers will be provided face coverings to use when in office settings where 6 feet social distancing is not possible, face covering is considered the desired method of limiting risk through droplet transmission. Areas such as check-in counters, cashiers, and other high-frequency public interaction locations where social distancing is not possible should consider the use of a sneeze guard to protect from droplet transmission. The following link addresses public-facing tasks where maintaining social distancing may be impossible and thus other safety measures should be taken: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/AirlineWorkers-RETAIL.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/AirlineWorkers-RETAIL.pdf).

Supervisors should request sneeze guards through the Return to Work portal. Facilities Operations has a local vendor that will allow us to measure and evaluate your space and will provide information on the cost of this installation. In addition, Spartan Printing has standard size sneeze guards available for purchase: [https://www.myorderdesk.com/catalog/?ProviderID=25829&CatalogID=16690](https://www.myorderdesk.com/catalog/?ProviderID=25829&CatalogID=16690)
SOCIAL DISTANCING SIGNAGE:
Global social distancing guidance is provided on the Return to Work website – [https://update.uncg.edu/return-to-work/](https://update.uncg.edu/return-to-work/) – for immediate use by departments to meet their immediate needs. Additional social distancing markings like floor markings can be made using tape or other visual indicators at little cost. In addition, Spartan Printing has social distancing signage available for purchase: [www.myorderdesk.com/catalog/?ProviderID=25829&CatalogID=16690](http://www.myorderdesk.com/catalog/?ProviderID=25829&CatalogID=16690).

Environmental Health and Safety staff can also assist with social distancing signage and practices as part of their evaluation of your request. Assistance with developing a social distancing strategy is available.

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COVID-19 ELEVATOR GUIDELINES
- Limit the number of individuals in an elevator to one person at a time.
- Use foot pedals or elbow to press buttons.
- Take the stairs if possible.
- Wear face covering.

Please do not adhere signage to elevator doors.

Thank you for your cooperation in keeping all Spartans and visitors safe.

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WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS:

- Wash and disinfect hands, frequently.
- Wear your mask.
- Keep physically 6 feet away from others.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.

Maintain physical distance of at least 6 feet, which is about two arms length.

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WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS:

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Meet virtually if possible.
- Wear a face covering.
- Wash your hands often.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Maintain physical distance of at least 6 feet, which is about two arms length.

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PREVENTING EXPOSURE TO CORONAVIRUS

1. **KNOW THE HAZARDS**
   - Person-to-person transmission occurs when an infected person spits or sneezes and the respiratory droplets travel through the air.
   - Surface contact can occur when a person touches their mouth, nose, or eye after they have touched something or someone that has the virus.

2. **IDENTIFY THE HAZARDS**
   - Know how the virus is spread:
     - Person-to-person transmission occurs when an infected person spits or sneezes and the respiratory droplets travel through the air.
     - Surface contact can occur when a person touches their mouth, nose, or eye after they have touched something or someone that has the virus.

3. **CONTROL THE HAZARDS**
   - If you feel sick, stay home.
   - Avoid close contact: stay at least 6 feet away from others.
   - Please wear a face covering.
   - Wash hands often (or use hand sanitizer).
   - Cover coughs and sneezes.
   - Disinfect often, especially with shared items and touch points.

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HOW TO WASH YOUR HANDS

Duration of the following procedure is 40-60 seconds:

1. Wet hands with soap and water.
2. Dry hands with paper towel.
3. Rub hands together.
4. Rub between fingers and thumbs.
5. Rub backs of hands and wrists.
6. Rinse hands thoroughly.
7. Dry hands with paper towel.

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HIGH-RISK PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (N-95 Respirators, Gowns, Goggles, or Face Shields)

Currently, only University first responders and Student Health Services employees are considered high-risk and thus required to use more stringent personal protective devices. Supervisors who feel that members of their department are high-risk should consult with Environmental Health and Safety. Further information on assessing risk level can be found in the OSHA guidance: [www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3993.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3993.pdf)
“We have a tremendous team of staff and faculty working on the issues. We have trust in each other to make upholding our community standards and expectations a priority. Let’s start now with what we can control – our actions as faculty and staff. Read the materials. Take the directed actions. Do what is right every day. That’s how we will make progress and move forward with confidence as we face this together.”

- Chancellor Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr.

**STAY UP TO DATE:** Monitor your email and regularly visit the Return to Work section of the UNCG COVID-19 Web Page.