



## UMMS Guidelines for Employee Return to Work Standards for Prevention of Workplace Transmission of SARS-CoV-2

Developed by the COVID-19 Workforce Safety Working Group\*

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### Highlights:

- All UMMS employees will undergo initial screening for SARS-CoV-2 prior to returning to work. Screening will involve a swab of the nose/mouth to test for the virus. No employee will be cleared to return to work before being screened, with a negative result.
- All UMMS employees will be required to self-monitor and report the presence or absence of symptoms of COVID-19 every day, beginning on the first day of return to work. Self-report using an app on your smartphone, or on the IT portal. Dual physicians should continue to self-report in the clinical system if they are already doing so, and do not need to self-report for UMMS.
- **Do not come to work if you are sick.** If you have any symptoms of COVID-19, please stay home. If you are already at work and become sick, please go home and contact Employee Health or Student Health Services, as appropriate.
- Social distancing, using a mask over your nose and face at all times while at work, and following excellent hand hygiene practices will keep us all safe. Stay 6 feet away from others, wear your mask at all times, and wash your hands frequently. Your mask will keep you from getting your colleagues sick, if you begin shedding the virus from your mouth/nose.

### Introduction

The COVID-19 Workforce Safety Working Group provides these guidelines to assist faculty, staff and students (**hereafter called “employees”**) at the University of Massachusetts Medical School with a safe transition to the work environment. These guidelines are based on best practices in effect as of the date of this document, updated from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and other health authorities, and in collaboration with our Infectious Diseases Division, Employee Health Services (EHS) and Student Health Services (SHS). Questions about these guidelines should be directed to our UMMS Infection Control Officer at [infection.control@umassmed.edu](mailto:infection.control@umassmed.edu).

### Assumptions and Limitations

As new information becomes available, these guidelines will be updated. The guidelines are based on best practices and evidence at the time of the date listed on the document, and have been developed to help maintain a safe working environment for all, until significant immunity in the community has

developed.<sup>1</sup> While UMMS leadership is working to provide a safe working environment, we recognize that transmission of SARS-CoV-2 will continue in the community, and that no environment is completely without risk of transmission. Employees are encouraged to speak with their personal medical provider(s) to obtain additional guidance on individual risk and safety measures. The processes and procedures below are aimed to try to minimize the risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 to colleagues from asymptomatic carriers.

For the purposes of these guidelines, an “exposure” is defined as unprotected (no face protection/face mask) close contact (within six feet for more than 15 minutes) with someone with documented or suspected COVID-19. By adhering to the guidelines below in the workplace and in the community, our students and employees will minimize “exposure” to others and will thus minimize the risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 to others while asymptomatic.

### **Returning to Work and Accessing the Buildings (UMMS, University Campus)**

*Guidance for other sites will be developed as additional teams return to work*

The campus physical security posture will remain in an elevated state through the first several weeks if not months upon our return to work. All employees will require a badge to access building perimeter doors and will be required to check in at reception desks where a surgical mask will be provided. These desks will be located at the LRB (2<sup>nd</sup> floor entrance - access via the West Garage), the ASC (2<sup>nd</sup> floor entrance, adjacent to the campus quad) and the Main School Lobby Entrance. Employees are reminded that they are required to display their campus identification at all times. Any visitors are required to be sponsored and escorted at all times by UMMS personnel.

At these entry points to the buildings, team members stationed at the sites will ask you to clean your hands with hand sanitizer and provide you with a surgical mask to wear while at work if you do not already have one. All employees are required to wear the mask at all times when on site, unless in a private office. Masks may be removed in a private office with a closed door, but must be worn at all times when outside of the private office.

## Getting ready to return to work: employee screening tests and self-monitoring

### **Screening tests**

#### **Initial SARS-CoV-2 screening before return to work**

Employees returning to work during this initial phase (May-June 2020) will be required to undergo nasopharyngeal swab testing for the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Details regarding an assigned date and time will be provided. Further guidance regarding testing in July 2020 and later will be provided as we continue to bring employees back to work. Testing will be conducted via a drive-through process at the Plantation Street Garage. Individuals who do not have a car may walk through the testing tent.

*Two forms of identification must be presented at the time of testing:*

1. UMMS Photo ID
2. Other government issued identification containing your date of birth (driver's license, identification card, etc.)

Because this is clinical testing, 2 types of identification are required for verification purposes.

While results will generally be available within 48 hours, depending on the time that the test is performed, it may take up to 3 days for employees to be notified of test results. Individuals with

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<sup>1</sup> Kissler et al. Projecting the transmission dynamics of SARS-CoV-2 through the postpandemic period. Science 14 Apr 2020. <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/early/2020/04/24/science.abb5793>

positive test results will be contacted by UMMS Infection Control for further instructions and will be referred to EHS or SHS, as indicated. Individuals with negative results will be notified via email.

***Please do not go to drive-through screening if you have symptoms.***

Employees with symptoms consistent with COVID-19<sup>2</sup> should contact their healthcare provider and call EHS at 508-793-6400 or SHS at 508-334-2818. Testing of symptomatic employees will be ordered by EHS or SHS, based on the presence of symptoms, and further instructions will be provided regarding staying out of work.

**Periodic SARS-CoV-2 re-screening after return to work**

After returning to work, periodic “sentinel” screening of a smaller proportion of employees will occur in various work areas. This means that some employees will periodically be asked to undergo nasopharyngeal screening to identify whether there are “pockets” or areas of infection on campus. If positive results occur, further/broader testing in that work area will occur to determine whether further action is needed.

**Self-monitoring app/check in daily**

*Information about self-monitoring is accessible directly:*

<https://umassmed.sharepoint.com/sites/information-technology/SitePages/S.aspx>

- Beginning on the first day that employees (all employees and students) return to work/learning, individuals will be required to check in with the UMMS infection control team daily. Self-reporting will involve a very brief and simple logging of health status via a mobile app or an online portal. The first time that you log in you will be asked to provide a current phone number for Employee Health Services/Infection Control to contact you in the event of a health concern. A job aid with step-by-step instructions is available at the link above.
- **Self-reporting is required daily, beginning on the first day that the employee is cleared to return to work.** Individuals who do not have a computer, tablet or smartphone at home are permitted to come to work and log their absence of symptoms at work, provided they do not have any symptoms. **Anyone who is sick must stay home and call EHS or SHS; employees/students may not report to work if sick.** Individuals without access to a computer, tablet or smartphone at home will be excused from self-reporting on days they are not coming to work.

*Dual physicians (clinical and school appointments) who have been logging their symptoms with the clinical system should continue that process. There is no requirement to also log with the school system.*

**Web-based ServiceNow Portal** <https://umassmed.edu/coronavirus/>

(click on the **red Health Status Tool icon**)

The first time that you log in you will be asked to provide a current phone number for Employee Health Services/Infection Control to contact you in the event of a health concern. Thereafter, you simply log in daily before coming to work, to indicate whether you have symptoms are not. If you have no symptoms, you are cleared to come to work.

**Smartphone app for self-monitoring/check in**

Download the Now Mobile App from the App Store, for either iPhone or Android. After downloading, open the application and connect to the UMass Medical School ServiceNow. Enter the instance name **umassmed**, then enter a desired nickname. Tap “Save and log in”. Further instructions are provided on the SharePoint site, at *Getting Started with the Self-Reporting Health Status Tool*.

(<https://umassmed.sharepoint.com/sites/information-technology/SitePages/S.aspx>)

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

The first time that you log in, you will need to use the web-based ServiceNow Portal to update your contact information (current phone number). Thereafter, you may use the app to log in daily and record your symptoms. If you have no symptoms, you are cleared to come to work.

### ***Symptoms of concern***

With the self-monitoring program, either through the web or the smartphone app, we are relying on employees to check in daily and to report any symptoms consistent with COVID-19<sup>2</sup>, which may include (but are not limited to) cough, trouble breathing, fever, chills with/without shaking, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, diarrhea and a new loss of taste or smell.

Faculty, post-doctoral scholars and staff with any of these symptoms must contact EHS at 508-793-6400. Students with any of these symptoms must contact SHS at 508-334-2818.

The manager of any employee or student with symptoms of COVID-19 may be contacted by Infection Control for further information and contact tracing in the work environment.

## Keeping yourself and your colleagues safe at work: Infection Control best practices

### **Universal Mask Policy**

Effective April 6, 2020, UMMS enacted a universal mask policy which will remain in effect until further notice. This policy requires all employees to always wear a face mask while on campus, in any building. The mask must cover the nose and mouth. Individuals working in private offices with closed doors may remove their mask only while in this setting. Masks must be worn in cubicles. Masks may be reused if not soiled. Masks prevent transmission of droplets from the nose/mouth to the environment and protect others from getting our germs. By following this policy, we will be able to decrease the risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in the workplace.

### **Social distancing**

Aligned with CDC guidelines<sup>3</sup>, social or “physical” distancing, refers to keeping distance between you and other people when outside of your home. This means staying at least six feet (about two arms lengths) from other people, avoiding gathering in groups, and avoiding crowded places. The SARS-CoV-2 virus is transmitted through droplets from the mouth/nose/lungs, launched into the air while talking, coughing or sneezing. Droplets can be inhaled into the lungs of individuals at close contact (<six feet) or may land onto surrounding surfaces. Transmission to others may then occur when hands touch surfaces with the virus on it and then touch the nose or face.

At UMMS, all members of our community will be required to adhere to social distancing guidelines. This means avoiding shaking hands upon greeting each other and maintaining appropriate distance when studying, working at benches, meeting in person, etc. Outside of the workplace, students and employees are also asked to avoid gatherings of more than 10 people, to maintain social distancing outside of the home, to avoid taxis or rideshares and if possible, public transportation. If public transportation is necessary, employees are asked to wear a face covering while using public transportation and to remain at least six feet away from others.

### **Hand hygiene**

Hands should be cleaned on a regular basis. Handwashing (at least 20 seconds of washing with soap and water) is preferred, particularly when hands are visibly soiled and should be performed throughout the day, following CDC guidelines<sup>4</sup> for hand hygiene. Hand sanitizer stations are also available and will be maintained across the campus. Employees should use the hand sanitizer when entering the campus,

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

and when leaving. Hand sanitizer is acceptable when hands are not visibly dirty. For more information on how handwashing can prevent the spread of germs, please refer to excellent resources from the CDC, including an excellent video<sup>5</sup>.

### **Cough etiquette**

Like other respiratory viruses, SARS-CoV-2 is transmitted through droplets that are spread into the air when speaking, sneezing, or coughing. In public settings at work, employees are required to wear a face covering at all times. In private settings, the face covering can be removed. If you do not have a face covering and have the urge to sneeze or cough, please do so into your elbow, or using a tissue to cover both your mouth and nose. To see how droplets are easily spread by speaking, please see this video at the *New England Journal of Medicine* website<sup>6</sup>.

### **Breaks for meals**

When employees take breaks for meals while at work, we recognize that there may be limited places to sit, relax and enjoy the break/meal. Taking breaks for meals by necessity involves removing a mask/face-covering, and this may pose a risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 while eating. To minimize the risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 from asymptomatic individuals, any of the following options should be implemented, and should be discussed with managers. Managers will work with their teams to oversee and enforce best practices at work.

- Employees should take breaks and meals in staggered shifts, as organized by their team/unit managers
- Seating in break rooms should maintain at least a six-foot distance between individuals.
- Employees should avoid prolonged breaks/meals (15 minutes or more) without a mask in break rooms/lunch areas.

When the cafeterias open, seating will be arranged to ensure appropriate social distancing between individuals, and similar standards apply with regard to time without a mask in eating areas. Time without a mask should be limited to 15 minutes or less.

### **Seating in public areas**

Aligned with the principles above, seating areas throughout the campus will be arranged to ensure appropriate social distancing between individuals. Masks should be worn in all public seating areas, including the library, student lounge, cafeteria, lobbies, learning communities and conference rooms, when these areas are open.

### **Keeping your work area safe**

Our campus common areas, restrooms and elevators are being cleaned regularly, at increased intervals, by our facilities teams. In your personal workspace, we ask that you please clean AND disinfect your work area daily. Any frequently touched area should be cleaned with a household disinfectant or 80 percent ethanol cleaner. This includes your computer workstation, keyboard, mouse, your desk, door handles, and any other frequently touched areas. If your work area is visibly dirty, please use soap and water to clean the area. After cleaning, use a household disinfectant or 80 percent ethanol cleaner.

## **Frequently Asked Questions about Returning to Work**

### **Where do I go if I have symptoms or am sick?**

We are relying on employees to check in daily and to report any symptoms consistent with COVID-19<sup>6</sup>, which may include cough, trouble breathing, fever, chills with/without shaking, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, diarrhea and a new loss of taste or smell.

Faculty, post-doctoral scholars and staff with any of these symptoms must contact EHS at 508-793-6400. Students with any of these symptoms must contact SHS at 508-334-2818.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>

<sup>6</sup> Anfinrud P et al. Visualizing Speech-Generated Oral Fluid Droplets with Laser Light Scattering. <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2007800>

The manager of any employee with symptoms of COVID-19 may be contacted by Dr. Sharone Green, the UMMS Infection Control Officer, for further information and contact tracing in the work environment, to ensure workplace safety. The Department of Public Health (DPH) may contact any individual/employee with COVID-19 for contract tracing in the community.

### **Where do I look for our COVID-19 policies and protocols?**

All UMMS policies and protocols relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic are posted on the UMMS COVID-19 website, <https://umassmed.edu/coronavirus/>. Questions about UMMS infection control processes and policies should be directed to Dr. Sharone Green at [infection.control@umassmed.edu](mailto:infection.control@umassmed.edu).

### **How is my privacy protected, in the event that I get sick?**

Due to the public health concerns created by the COVID-19 pandemic, and out of an abundance of caution and concern for the health and welfare of our employees, our Infection Control Officer, Dr. Sharone Green, will contact the managers of employees who are diagnosed with COVID-19 to determine whether there are workplace contacts who must be notified about an exposure, in order to undergo testing and possible self-monitoring, self-quarantine or self-isolation. The CDC website has excellent explanations of each of these terms<sup>7</sup>. If workplace contact tracing is indicated, Dr. Green will work with the employee's manager to help arrange with notifications. Please be assured that individual privacy will be protected to the extent possible, while ensuring attention to public health needs. Employees with proven COVID-19 (a positive test result) may be contacted by the Department of Public Health for contact tracing outside of the workplace, according to established public health guidelines.

### **What if I need accommodations, or have questions about specific personal or family health conditions?**

Individuals with questions about personal health concerns/risk factors for return to work should speak with their healthcare provider(s) for guidance. Personal circumstances can be worked out with the manager, in consultation with the HR Leave of Absence Coordinator or their HR Employee Relations Consultant. Individuals in need of accommodations due to personal health concerns should contact the Director for Accommodations, Katrina Durham, at [katrina.durham@umassmed.edu](mailto:katrina.durham@umassmed.edu) or 774-455-4804. Additional information about the accommodations process can be found on the website, at <https://www.umassmed.edu/ada/>. Please speak with your healthcare provider(s) about your unique health situation, and any concerns about return to work.

### **I have concerns about childcare with my return to work; what are my options?**

Due to concerns about spread of SARS-CoV-2 in the workplace, as well as overall safety concerns, children are not permitted in the workplace. Employees with questions about how to manage demands of childcare are encouraged to speak with their managers to arrange flexible options with regard to their return to work, which may include:

- Working in shifts that will help with childcare needs
- Job or task sharing with others who also have childcare needs
- Arranging mixed work schedules that involve some onsite work and some remote work

### **Is the Campus providing elevated cleaning services upon staff return to work?**

Yes, in addition to the regular level of services across the campus, the Environmental Building Services (EBS) team will provide additional high touch point disinfecting several times a day in common spaces. This includes such areas as doorknobs, elevator buttons, and stair rails. Please note that for offices, cubicles and labs (benches, write up spaces, alcoves, linear equipment rooms, procedures spaces), employees are responsible for their assigned spaces as follows:

- Employees are responsible for cleaning surfaces – desk, phones, computers, printers, tables, chairs, lab benches, lab equipment, refrigerators/freezers, door handles
- Employees will be responsible to place trash can and recyclable container in hallway for EBS pick up and content removal

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>

- Departments are responsible for cleaning all break room microwaves, refrigerators, coffee makers, and other equipment

**Does the campus have good HVAC systems installed to help with air flow?**

The campus heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems are some of the most advanced systems based on our biomedical research programs. They already provide elevated levels of outside air, filtration, pressurization and exhaust systems that meet and exceed national laboratory standards and state code. The campus laboratories are heavily ventilated with filtered outside air and the maintenance staff will continue to provide elevated air flow. Where possible, other areas that are ventilated with a mix of filtered outside air and recirculated air will have increased air flow.

**Will there be increased/enhanced cleaning of an area where someone with COVID-19 has worked?**

Yes, our EBS team is available to perform enhanced cleaning of space upon a positive case.

**Will the elevators have restrictions?**

The campus elevators have been posted for a maximum occupancy of four individuals based on social distancing and an average ride time of several minutes. Please do not enter an elevator should you see the occupancy is at or over the limit, please wait for the next elevator – or take the stairs if that is an option.

**Parking Shuttle and Transportation**

The Plantation Street garage will reopen and resume shuttle service on May 18. All employees will be required to park in assigned parking locations as indicated by their parking tag. The follow measures are going to be in place to ensure social distancing:

- Shuttles will run at 50 percent capacity (every other seat will be blocked off) with support of additional 25 passenger vans to supplement the existing passenger van fleet
- Masks will be required and distributed by dispatch/driver
- Shuttles will be disinfected after every trip during peak hours, and every hour during off peak

Contact Information, At-A-Glance

Dr. Sharone Green, Infection Control Officer	<a href="mailto:infection.control@umassmed.edu">infection.control@umassmed.edu</a>
Employee Health Services	508-793-6400
Student Health Services:	
Clinical/COVID-19 inquiries	508-334-2818 (from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., after normal business hours on-call physician)
Non-clinical needs	508-334-8464 (forms, insurance questions, general non-urgent student health questions)
Environmental Health & Safety	508-856-3985
	<a href="http://www.umassmed.edu/bmp/facilities/environmental-health-and-safety">www.umassmed.edu/bmp/facilities/environmental-health-and-safety</a>
Director of Accommodations	774-455-4804
Human Resources	508-856-5260

**Facilities-related questions or concerns may be directed as follows:**

Environmental Building Services  
(Questions about cleaning, missed service  
or requests for enhanced services)

508-856-2721

Campus facilities maintenance

508-856-3292

[FacMGTWorkRequest@umassmed.edu](mailto:FacMGTWorkRequest@umassmed.edu)

Facilities maintenance for Biotech Park,  
South Street or Maple Ave.

508-856-4444 during regular business hours

508-856-4750 after hours

[BioTechWorkReq@umassmed.edu](mailto:BioTechWorkReq@umassmed.edu) or

[Southstreet.Security@umassmed.edu](mailto:Southstreet.Security@umassmed.edu)

**Students with concerns**

Dr. Mark Miceli, Assistant Vice Provost for Student Life and Director, Positive Learning Environment  
[www.umassmed.edu/studentlife/studentresources/positive-learning](http://www.umassmed.edu/studentlife/studentresources/positive-learning)

**\*COVID-19 Workforce Safety Working Group**

Dr. Terry Flotte, Dean and Provost

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Dr. Sonia Chimienti, Vice Provost for Student Life and Enrollment Management

Dr. Phil Fournier, Director, Student Health Services

Dr. Maria Michas, Director, Employee Health Services

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