

COVID-19

Description

Environmental Health & Safety continues to provide our critical services and assistance to the research community. Our department is working with several other University units in response to the COVID-19 crisis. This page supplements information found at coronavirus.ufl.edu. If you need assistance, please contact us at (352) 392-1591 or covid@ehs.ufl.edu.

In an effort to protect the community, faculty, staff and students located at UF's Gainesville campus will be invited to complete a weekly COVID-19 screening questionnaire and request testing through [UF Health Screen, Test & Protect](#). Survey links will be emailed at the beginning of each week. More information can be on the [UF at Work announcement](#).

[su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" How and when can I get the COVID-19 vaccine? "] Information provided by UF Health regarding COVID-19 vaccine availability, safety, and science can be found here: <https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org/vaccinations/>

[/su_spoiler] [su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" If I have been potentially exposed to COVID-19 and/or need a test what do I do? "] Please visit the [UF Health Screen, Test and Protect "What should I do If...?"](#) website for complete information.

[/su_spoiler] [su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" University COVID-19 Resources "]

- [Main UF COVID-19 website](#)
- [UF Screen Test and Protect](#)
- [UFHR Institutional Recovery and COVID-19 Return to Workplace](#)
- [Impact of COVID-19 on Research and Sponsored Programs](#)
- [UFHR Guidance on COVID-19 Response for Employees](#)
- [Signage](#)

[/su_spoiler] [su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" External Resources "]

- [CDC Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Florida Department of Health 2019 Novel Coronavirus Response](#)
- [The Association for Biosafety and Biosecurity COVID-19 Toolbox](#)
- [EPA Approved Disinfectants](#)

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COVID-19 Hierarchy of Controls

COVID-19 Hierarchy of Controls

The Hierarchy of Controls is a system used to deploy effective controls within an organization, workplace, or community to identify the most effective ways to control a hazard. Usually categorized as: Elimination, Substitution, Engineering controls, Protocol/Practices, and Personal Protective Equipment, the hierarchy below has been adjusted for COVID-19 to include Community Protective Equipment (face coverings). Please refer to the graphic and guidance below for details.

[su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" CONTROL METHODS "] [su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Elimination "] Completely eliminating exposure to the hazard is the most effective control.

- Stay home, work remotely if possible, and avoid public areas.
- Avoid use of shared equipment and spaces.
- Conduct virtual appointments, meetings, site visits, and training through the use of web conferencing and video call applications such as Zoom or Skype.
- Consider if in-person contact is required. Examples where it is/may be necessary include front-line service and healthcare workers.

[/su_spoiler] [su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Engineering Controls "]

- Improve ventilation by opening doors and windows or modifying HVAC systems to increase air changes per hour.
- Disinfectants to use against SARS-CoV-2 can be found using the [List N Tool: COVID 19 Disinfectants](#) See PREVENTION CONTROL FAQs [What if social distancing can't be maintained?](#) for more information.
- EH&S does not recommend UV sterilization. Please contact EH&S at covid@ehs.ufl.edu for more information.
- Use barriers, partitions and ropes to separate employees from public or building occupants, e.g. plexiglass screens, sneeze guards, theater ropes and stanchions, hazard warning tape, etc.
- Use biosafety cabinets when performing research.
- Utilize drive-thru style partitions and windows.
- Use hands-free equipment including trash receptacles, soap and towel dispensers, door openers and more.
- Create isolated spaces/workstations for employees or students when possible.
- Portable HEPA filtration units are discouraged by EH&S. Please email covid@ehs.ufl.edu for more information.

[/su_spoiler] [su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Protocols "] Additional **University Policies** include:

Protocol guidance and examples to ensure a safe work environment can be found on the [Safe Campus Guideline & Protocols website](#).

These include but are not limited to:

- Wearing face coverings
- Practicing physical distancing
- Practicing proper hand hygiene
- Cleaning
- Monitoring indoor air quality
- Monitoring density/security of building spaces
- Ensuring contractors, vendors and suppliers adhere to University COVID-19 guidelines
- Working in shifts to avoid clusters of people in labs/rooms. There should be no contact or overlap between the shifts unless occupancy limits can be met.

Ready made **Signs** for many COVID-19 related issues are located on the UF Health [Ready to Go Assets](#)

• website. Signs include:

- Facecoverings
- Handwashing
- Traffic flow
- Entry and Exit
- Elevator Occupancy
- COVID-19 Symptoms
- Physical Distancing

Provide **Employee Training** through the following videos:

- [How to Use a Face Mask](#)
- [How to Properly Remove Gloves](#)

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) "] PPE is encouraged within the scope of specific job duties (such as working in healthcare, conducting research, custodial services, etc.).

Always follow [PPE Donning and Doffing](#) order of operations.

Do not share PPE. Gloves and other PPE should be discarded or replaced as needed

Respirators (N95)

- N95 respirators are best utilized in settings when working with known/presumed positive COVID-19 patients and/or when performing aerosol-generating procedures.
- The UF Respiratory Protection Program Requirements apply to all employees who wish to wear a respirator.
- If you elect to wear an N95 for general personal protection it is considered "Voluntary filtering facepiece (N95) respirator use" and requires submission of a [Voluntary Use of Respirator form](#). This form should be held by your department and does not need to be submitted to EH&S. Completed forms should be held with a designated departmental supervisor. They do not get submitted to EH&S. The voluntary use exemption does not apply to other types of respirators.
 - For reuse of respirators, place the respirator in a breathable bag (paper) so that it can dry out. Allow 72 hours before reuse.
 - Use instructions for the specific respirators being provided to faculty during COVID can be found here: [Kimberly Clark duckbill N95 donning and doffing](#)
- Refer to this video for instructions [Putting on and Taking off a Mask – YouTube](#)
- If you are required as part of your job to wear an N95, all aspects of the UF respiratory protection plan including medical clearance and fit testing must be followed.
- Always follow [facial hair guidance](#) to ensure proper seal of mask.

Gloves

Wearing gloves has minimal benefits for avoiding exposure to SARS-COV-2. Handwashing is a more effective precaution to prevent the spread of disease than the use of gloves. As a standard practice, always wash your hands after removing gloves.

Eye protection

Eye protection should always be worn for any procedures that could be hazardous to the eyes (according to a risk assessment). Regarding COVID-19, eye protection may prevent you from touching your eyes with contaminated hands. Follow your jobs risk assessed duties to determine if eye protection is appropriate.

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Community Protective Equipment "]
Community protective equipment (face coverings and masks), social distancing and proper hand hygiene are key measures in mitigating the spread of COVID-19.

EH&S recommends a 3-ply surgical mask that meets ASTM Barrier 1 protection or a cloth masks made of at least 2 layers of fabric.

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Donning/Putting on Mask "]

1. Use alcohol-based sanitizer or wash your hands before donning a face mask.
2. Inspect the mask for holes or tears. Do not wear damaged or soiled masks. The filtration efficiency and protective ability of a face mask is compromised when the mask becomes wet, torn or dislodged.
3. For a disposable mask, ensure the colored side faces outward.
4. Find the top part where the metal piece or stiff edge is. Place and tighten it over your nose.
5. Pull the mask down to cover mouth, nose, and chin.
6. Tighten the nose piece and ensure there are no gaps between the mask and your face.
7. Do not wear a mask for more than 3 continuous hours to prevent it from getting damp*.
8. Always be sure to pay attention to your own medical signs (dizziness, difficulty breathing, headache) that may indicate that the mask is having an adverse effect on you.

**There is no set rule for how long a mask should be worn as it depends on humidity levels, respiration rate, nasal discharge, talking, etc. There are various studies that investigate the effectiveness of surgical masks over time in a surgical setting by measuring bacterial contamination of the surgical surface. Based on these studies, EH&S recommends continuous use of no more than 3 hours as a best practice.*

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Doffing/Removing Mask "]

- Proper use of a face mask is detailed in this [video](#).
- Be vigilant to not touch your mask.
- Do not wear a wet mask.

Cloth face coverings and masks shall:

- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- Be secured with ties or ear loops
- Allow for breathing without restriction
- Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape
- Be washed each day after use, disposed, or retired for 72 hours
- Be constructed with multiple layers of fabric

Some masks do not provide adequate community droplet protection

- Masks made from fleece or single layer cloth (bandanas or gaiters)
- Masks with exhalation valves

- Face Shields

[/_su_spoiler] [/su_spoiler]

[su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" PREVENTION CONTROL FAQs â€™"] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" What disinfectants should I use in my work area? â€™"]

- ViewÂ [List N Tool:COVID-19 Disinfectants](#), a searchable list of products for use against SARS-CoV-2, the novel human coronavirus that causes COVID-19. Certain suitable products are not included in List N. If the product label specifies efficacy against a human coronavirus, it is also acceptable to use.
- Quaternary ammonium products (such as Cavicide, Coverage TB, Lysol IC, etc.) or hydrogen peroxide based disinfectants (such as Accel TB, Oxivir, Rescue, etc.) have high material compatibility and are recommended for sensitive equipment.
- Bleach is very efficacious but isn't compatible with all surfaces. Be sure to inactivate any residual bleach with either ethanol/isopropanol or water.
- Ethanol is discouraged as a disinfectant since it often evaporates before contact time is met.
- Ensure you are following the product guidelines for dilution and contact time.

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" What do I do if I can't wash my hands? â€™"] If it is not reasonable to travel to a handwashing sink, use a hand sanitizer. Both hand sanitizer and hand washing are effective means of diminishing the spread of COVID.

If you don't have hand sanitizer:

- Don't touch your face
- Use paper-towels to open doors and touch surfaces
- Wash your hands as soon as possible

If you find yourself regularly not having access to hand sanitizer or handwashing sinks, bring hand sanitizer with you.

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" What is the disinfection protocol for common touch items? â€™"] Unless a person with known or suspected COVID-19 has been in an area, routine cleaning of these areas is all that is necessary. UF Facilities Services is taking a pro-active approach andÂ [expanding their cleaning efforts](#). Additional guidelines for cleaning can be found on theÂ [CDC website](#).

Contact your building manager for specifics to your area.

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" What if social distancing can't be maintained? â€™"] Certain job activities require close contact, which if not executed in this manner, may hinder workplace safety or impede instruction. Under these unique circumstances, additional measures must be used in order to protect people working in close contact.

- Identify activities where close contact cannot be avoided (confocal microscopes, animal surgeries, human subject research, etc.). Separate out the specific step or steps within the process (stations) and train staff or students how to safely breach distancing requirements using the guidance below.
- Don a ASTM level 1 rated medical face masks as opposed to a conventional polyester community protective masks. The ASTM level 1 masks afford a much higher degree of droplet mitigation.

- It is recommended that personnel don a face shield in addition to the ASTM level 1 rated mask.
- Dedicated face shields are recommended.
 - If face shields will be reused, they must be disinfected before and after use.
 - See PREVENTION CONTROLS FAQs “What disinfectants should I use in my work area” for more information.
 - Ensure the disinfectant is compatible with the face shield.
 - Limit close interaction to under 15 minutes if possible. The less time spent in close contact the better.
 - Limit close interactions to between 2 people (no grouping)
 - Plexiglas or other flexible shielding should be considered when distance requirements can’t be maintained
 - Personnel must don any other job-specific personal protective equipment (PPE) as necessary for the work environment.

It may be more appropriate to implement other physical or operational control measures. Contact UF EH&S (covid@ehs.ufl.edu) for assistance with risk assessment and mitigation.

Is there additional information on masks? “] What kind of face masks can we wear? “] EH&S recommends a disposable 3-ply surgical mask that meets ASTM Barrier 1 protection or a reusable cloth mask constructed of at least 2 layers of fabric

A cloth or paper mask containing a clear plastic field may be used in certain circumstances. A large plastic field close to your face may cause difficulties breathing and discomfort. Try to choose as small a plastic field as possible and always pay attention to any medical signs (headache, shortness of breath, etc.) that your mask may be causing. If these symptoms occur, change the model of your mask.

Visit the CDC Use of Masks site for more information and mask considerations.

Where can I get a mask? “] Masks are available for purchase at the UF Bookstore, all Gator Dining locations and from 50 vending machines across campus.

Where can my department get face masks and other protective supplies? “] Visit the Procurement Services website for information and resources for obtaining assorted supplies.

Are any mask types considered to be inadequate? “] The following masks do not provide the necessary protection from droplets

- Masks made from fleece or single layer cloth, (i.e bandannas or neck gaiters).
- Masks with exhalation valves.
- Plastic Face Shields alone .

Please visit the following sites for more guidance:

- CDC’s Considerations for Wearing Masks
- UF Mask Policy

What if someone refuses to wear a mask or social distance? “] Notify your supervisor and/or reference the HR Employee Requirements for COVID-19 website. Questions and/or reporting violations can be addressed with UF HR Employee

Relations at EmployeeRelations@hr.ufl.edu

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Is there guidance on KN95's? "]

- KN95s cannot be successfully fit tested. Therefore, they cannot be considered to have the protection of a filtering face piece respirator. KN95s are appropriate, however, as community protective masks

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" What is the guidance for shared equipment?"]

- Community Protective Masks must be used while sharing equipment.
- The sharing of laptops, notebooks, telephones, touchscreens, and writing utensils is discouraged
- Disinfectants and hand sanitizer will be placed in close proximity to shared equipment.
- Workers will wash/disinfect hands before and after handling shared items.
- High touch surfaces on the equipment shall be disinfected before or after each use.
- For guidance on disinfectants, see Prevention Controls FAQs – “What disinfectants should I use in my work area”
- Guidance on tool cleaning can be found [here](#)
- If equipment must be shared between multiple people before being disinfected, take care to avoid cross contamination of clothing, face, and hands.
- Social distancing shall still be maintained when using shared equipment. If for some reason it cannot be maintained (two people using the equipment at once in addition to sharing the equipment between people) then refer to – “What if social distancing cannot be maintained” in PREVENTION CONTROLS FAQs.

EH&S COVID-19 Lab Research Resources

[Research Resumption Checklist](#)

Remember to look for the current recommendations on the [CDC](#) and [The Association for Biosafety and Biosecurity](#) websites. This guide provides steps that should be taken by researchers working in UF laboratories to mitigate potential hazards. Additional information on the administrative impact of COVID-19 on research can be found on [UF Research's Resumption Plan webpage](#).

Remember: Always remove your gloves & wash your hands before leaving the lab.

[/_su_spoiler] [/su_spoiler] [su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" RESEARCH GUIDANCE INFORMATION "] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Working from home "] As a reminder, continued work on projects requiring physical experimentation at home is prohibited. **No laboratory equipment, chemicals or biological agents may be transported off campus for use at home.**

[_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Working alone in the lab "]

- Supervisors (PI) should be notified of entry and expected departure time.
- UF ID must always be displayed when on campus by utilizing a lanyard or badge.
- Ensure that individuals performing critical tasks have been adequately trained, have access to all PPE and essential safety equipment, and understand whom to contact with technical or safety questions.
- Laboratory supervisors are strongly encouraged to prohibit their employees from working alone in areas where hazardous materials, conditions, or processes are present. Supervisors who permit

employees to work alone could require them to choose one of the following risk mitigation methods:

- The lone employee shall arrange to call or text his/her supervisor on a periodic basis to check in and report their status. The supervisor must be located anywhere that is reliably reachable by phone.

â€¢ The lone employee can arrange for another person inside the same building to physically stop by for a periodic wellness check. This method is particularly effective in areas where cell phone coverage is unreliable or where laboratory noise is substantial.

â€¢ Wellness checks, texts, and phone calls should be made at intervals not to exceed 2 hours for standard work.

â€¢ Report to University of Florida Police (352-392-1111) in the event of an emergency or inability to contact the lone worker.

- Safety requirements supersede any occupancy limits. Employees must not attempt to perform any highly hazardous activities while working alone. Examples of highly hazardous activities include, but are not limited to the use of:

- Pyrophoric or water reactive chemicals

â€¢ Explosive or potentially explosive chemicals materials

â€¢ Acutely toxic materials

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Scheduling"]

- A daily briefing of what activities are to be performed should be discussed with the PI.
- Utilize a rotating schedule to maintain social distancing requirements. Entry and expected departure times should be predetermined for each shift. Do not overlap shifts unless occupancy limits can be met. Communication between shifts should be done via phone calls or Zoom meeting as much as possible.

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" SARS-CoV-2 Research "] Any scope of research which involves the isolation, concentration, propagation, or in vivo inoculation with viable SARS-CoV-2 must be performed in accordance with BSL-3/ABSL-3 containment and practices.

For more information, please contact the EH&S Biological Safety Office (BSO@ehs.ufl.edu or 352-392-1591)

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" LAB Specific PPE During Covid"]

Consistent with standard operations, PPE for laboratory activities is dependent upon a lab specific risk assessment.

If a respiratory hazard is identified by the risk assessment, employees need to be enrolled in the UF Respiratory Protection Program. Per the Respiratory Protection Policy, if the use of an N95 respirator is required, individuals must complete a Medical Evaluation and annual respirator fit test.

Voluntary respirator use requires completion of an [N95 Voluntary Use of Filtering Facepiece Respirators Form](#). Completed forms should be held with a designated departmental supervisor. They do not get submitted to EH&S.

As a reminder, PPE needs to be removed and hands must be washed **before** exiting the lab.

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Community Protective Masks in the lab"]

EH&S recommends that each laboratory identify what activities would allow for wearing a Community Protective mask within the lab and outside the research environment. Care should be taken to identify possible opportunities for contamination of the mask with any laboratory infectious or recombinant

agents (BSL1 or BSL2). In the event of presumed facemask contamination, the mask must be discarded in accordance with standard biological waste procedures before exiting the lab. Potential exposures or near misses are to be reported to the EH&S Biological Safety Office (bsso@ehs.ufl.edu or 352-392-1591)

[/_su_spoiler] [/su_spoiler] [su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" RESEARCH FAQs"]
[_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" What if someone working in the lab becomes symptomatic/tests positive for COVID-19? "] Symptomatic employees, including yourself, should stay home if any of the [COVID-19 symptoms](#) are present. UF Faculty, Staff, or Students can follow the expanded [guidance on who to call](#) if symptoms are present, have come into close contact with a COVID-19 person, or test positive.

For confirmed positive cases:

- Inform department or building manager to restrict access to room. The room should be locked and a sign placed on the door stating that access is forbidden.
- The department or building manager should go [here](#) for assistance with COVID-19 cleaning in a UF Facility.
- The department or building manager will reopen the space once cleaning has been conducted.
- Appropriate agencies may conduct contact tracing. Please visit the [UF Health Screen, Test & Protect](#) website for more information.
- Do not return to work until you have met the requirements of the quarantine and return-to-workplace protocols provided by HR and/or your supervisor.

More information can be found on the [UF HR Guidance on COVID-19 response for employees](#).

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Do labs have additional cleaning considerations?"] Facilities will not disinfect laboratory equipment or benches. Laboratorians will have to perform the rest of the decontamination themselves if a 72 hour inactive period cannot be accomplished in the space.

- Adhere to BSL-2 practices
- Don appropriate PPE (community protective mask, disposable gloves, lab coat, and eye protection)
- Prepare disinfectants. See Prevention Controls FAQs – what disinfectants can I use in my work area
- Disinfect an open work surface which will serve as your “clean area”.
- Gradually decontaminate items/equipment. After disinfecting items, transfer them to the clean area. As you clear more bench space, you can gradually expand the clean zone.
- For sensitive equipment, do not douse it with disinfectant. Use pre-made wipes or spray disinfectant on an absorbent towel to decontaminate exposed surfaces.
- Upon completion of work, doff PPE accordingly: Surface disinfect disposable gloves. Doff and disinfect eye protection. Doff the gown. Doff and discard gloves using the beak method. Wash hands before exiting the lab.

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" What are the UF guidance for research with regard to COVID-19? "] Please visit:

- [UF Research Resumption Plan](#)
- [Business Affairs Safe Campus Guidelines](#)

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" How are blood draws for research applications impacted by the COVID-19 situation? "] If blood is being drawn from presumed healthy individuals, these can be safely collected in accordance with universal precautions. However, if the patient is known/suspected to have an infectious disease, the investigator must register a project within the Gator TRACS system. Depending upon the nature of the infectious disease, enhanced PPE and other safety practices may be required. In accordance with UF Health policy, it is strongly recommended that patients are prescreened for normal temperature in order to help provide confidence that they are not actively ill.

Facilities Guidance during COVID-19

This section provides guidance/mitigations for EH&S risk assessed facilities related COVID-19 issues. The department or building manager should go [here](#) for assistance with COVID-19 cleaning in a UF Facility.

[/_su_spoiler] [/su_spoiler] [su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" FACILITY GUIDELINES "] Building Evacuations "] In accordance with the published guidelines found on the EH&S Emergencies website

- Follow the building plan which is available by contacting the Building Administrator or Environment, Health and Safety.
- When the building is in alarm all occupants must leave immediately. If you are only part-way in the building turn around and go back outside. At this point, you will be wearing your mask. Continue to do so once outside.
- If you are in the building, you should already be following the face covering and distancing policy. If you are in an area where face coverings are not required, put it on and leave via the nearest safe exit.
- During an emergency evacuation, "ALL EXITS" are available regardless of any established one-way travel through the building. Try to keep 6 feet apart.
- Once Outside:
 - Maintain Social Distancing.
 - Go to the primary gathering area and maintain 6 feet distance from others if possible.
 - Be aware and keep clear of incoming response vehicles.
 - Keep your mask or face covering on if it is NOT feasible to maintain physical/social distancing measures (i.e., at least 6 feet of separation between others).

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" UF Vehicle Use"]

- See "Ready to Go Assets" website for a printable "Vehicle Use Policy" to place in UF vehicles
- Wear a face covering
- Limit vehicle occupancy, when possible, to one person.
- If multiple occupants:
 - All should wear face masks.
 - Turn AC to non-recirculating.
 - Open windows if possible.
- For UF vehicles transporting more than two people:
 - All occupants should wear Surgical Masks (ASTM1)
 - The capacity of the vehicle will be no more than half the available seats
-

Clean the vehicle after use

- Remove dirt and debris first so disinfectant will be effective.
- Use disinfectant wipes or spray and disposable towels to disinfect high touch points (steering wheels, door handle, etc.)
- Sanitize all keys and key rings prior to return

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Spacing "]

- Guidance for cubicles can be found here: [HR cubicle guidelines](#).
- See [Ready to Go Assets](#) for printable Distance Seating, Door Signage, Floor Traffic, Physical Distancing, Elevator signs, etc.

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Regarding the opening of windows to decrease the risk of COVID-19 exposures"] EH&S has received requests from faculty and staff asking whether sealed windows in various buildings on campus can be opened to increase the ventilation within a classroom or office. There are several guidelines from various agencies that list opening windows as one method of reducing chances of COVID-19 exposure. All these guidelines regarding window opening come with a warning that it should be done only when possible. Little detail is provided regarding why it may not be prudent to open windows.

In the case of the University of Florida, the opening of windows is discouraged. A vast majority of University buildings have central air conditioning systems which are designed to recirculate a certain percentage of conditioned air while refreshing this air with a certain percentage of outside air before redistributing to the building.

Opening windows will disrupt this air mixture balance with possible negative consequences:

- Introducing uncontrolled amounts of outside air can reduce the ability of the air conditioning to maintain relative humidity levels within comfortable ranges. If the relative humidity cannot be controlled, the chance of mold growth will increase.
- The outside air entering a space via a window is not filtered and may contain biological or other contaminants from the outside (mold, pollen, exhaust fumes). Outside air entry via the air conditioning system is filtered prior to distribution to the building.
- Temperature control within an occupied area becomes more difficult when unconditioned outside air enters a space.
- In many cases, windows have been sealed due to mechanical deficiencies which make normal operation of the window unlikely. Windows may have also been sealed due to the reasons given above and unsealing them would be detrimental to the overall indoor air quality in a space.

Adhering to the current requirements of wearing a mask, maintaining adequate social distancing, and practicing frequent handwashing provide effective risk mitigation for COVID-19.

[/_su_spoiler] [/su_spoiler] [su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" FACILITIES FAQs"]

[_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Can I purchase a portable filter unit for my office or lab?"] EH&S generally discourages the purchasing of these types of units. If you need more information please email: covid@ehs.ufl.edu

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Where can I find additional cleaning guidelines?"] Please visit the following resources for more information:

- [Guidelines for Routine Cleaning and Disinfection of Community Areas at UF](#)
- See [PREVENTION CONTROL FAQ](#) TM [What disinfectants can I use in my work area?](#)

for further information.

- See [PREVENTION CONTROLS](#) “What is the guidance for shared equipment?”

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" How can I submit a Facilities Services work request?"] A service request can be submitted on the [Facilities Services website](#).

Contact them directly for any other questions concerning the cleaning of building spaces and/or repairs.

Academics and Covid-19 at UF

Guidance provided here is directed towards addressing COVID-19 related issues in the academic environment, which includes in-person classes and experiential labs.

[/_su_spoiler] [/su_spoiler] [su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" ACADEMICS "] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Students and Families"]

- [Guidelines for Being on Campus](#)
- [Things to know from the Division of Student Affairs](#)
- [Student Behavioral Expectations](#)
- [Academic Calendar and Course Formats](#)

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Instructors "]

- [Guidelines for Faculty in the Classroom](#)
- [Delivery of Instruction](#)
- [Safe Campus Guidelines & Protocols](#)
- Faculty are being given respirators that they may choose to use during instruction. This falls under the Voluntary Use of Respirators guidance. For information on this guidance and for instructions on how to use a respirator see above in the Control Methods / Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) / Respirators (N95 section)

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Classrooms "] It is advisable to prop doors open prior to class beginning and prior to class ending to minimize handling of the doors by multiple students. Common touchpoints, such as doorknobs, should be wiped down frequently. The university will provide a disinfectant bucket with wipes for each academic classroom and class lab and require users to maintain responsibility for wiping down individual areas.

[/_su_spoiler] [_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Experiential Labs"] **Spacing**

- Students should always maintain 6 ft of separation.
- See Distance Seating in [Ready to Go Assets](#) for printable signs for classroom seats.
- When separation cannot be maintained:
 - See [PREVENTION CONTROL FAQs](#) “What if social distancing can’t be maintained?” for more information.

Equipment Sharing

- See [PREVENTION CONTROLS FAQs](#) “what is the guidance on equipment sharing”

Disinfection protocols

- For disinfectant to be effective, gross contaminants must first be removed. Clean away gross

- contamination (soil, grease, etc) from high touch points with soap and water
- Additional information for disinfectants can be found on the [EPA List N Tool site](#).
- If your equipment is sensitive to disinfectants or difficult to disinfect – contact COVID@ehs.ufl.edu for assistance with risk assessment and mitigation.

For the complete list of UF Health Student related COVID-19 FAQs, please see the following resource: <https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org/screen-test-protect-2/frequently-asked-questions/#students>

[/_su_spoiler] [/_su_spoiler] [su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" ACADEMICS FAQ"] [/_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Which students are required to be tested every two weeks?"]

- See <https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org/screen-test-protect-2/information-for/students/>

[/_su_spoiler] [/_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" Do I still have to be tested every two weeks if I have tested positive with a polymerase chain reaction, or PCR, test in the prior 90 days and were investigated by UF Health Screen, Test & Protect? "]

- See [Are there any exclusions? FAQ for students here: https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org/screen-test-protect-2/frequently-asked-questions/#students_exclusions](https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org/screen-test-protect-2/frequently-asked-questions/#students_exclusions)

[/_su_spoiler] [/_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" What if a student in my face-to-face classroom is not wearing a mask?"] Ask the student to put on a mask. If the student declines, ask the student to leave the room. If the student declines to leave, it is within your discretion to adjourn the class for the day on health grounds. You must report the student to the Student Affairs COVID-19 Education Office by filling out the [COVID 19 Behavioral Report Form](#). A student who refuses to leave class is not permitted to return to class without Student Affairs COVID-19 Education Office permission. Faculty will receive documentation that the student is permitted to return to class.

Please refer to the [Faculty Guidance resource file](#) for more information.

[/_su_spoiler] [/_su_spoiler style="fancy" icon="chevron" title=" How do I ensure proper distancing in my classroom?"] Class sizes are limited in conjunction with the available space. Students should attempt to remain at least 6 ft. apart in accordance with social distancing guidelines. “This Seat is Taken” signs are available through [Ready-to-Go Assets](#).

COVID-19 Guidelines for UF Essential Boating Safety

Please visit the [EH&S Boating Safety](#) page.

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