COVID-19: How to Work Safely in Student Residences or Family Housing Units

This guideline was developed by Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) for all employees who are required to work in occupied student residences (e.g., East Residence and East Townhouses) or family housing units (e.g., College Avenue and Wellington Woods). In order to prevent the transmission of COVID-19, appropriate precautionary measures, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements must be followed. The measures and PPE listed in this document have been developed in consultation with Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health. The University of Guelph will take measures to minimize its employees’ potential exposure to COVID-19 positive or self-isolating residents. Working in rooms where there is a confirmed positive case of COVID-19 or an individual in self-isolation will only be considered for emergency work. In the case of an emergency, direction will be provided by Management in compliance with approved University of Guelph COVID-19 health and safety protocols. An emergency is defined as a situation that poses an immediate risk to life safety, sanitization system operation, or significant damage or destruction to University property.

Before you Come to Campus

- If you feel sick, stay home, DO NOT come to campus/work and inform your supervisor.
- If you are coming to campus, or another University site for work, you must complete the University of Guelph COVID-19 Daily Screening Form [1] BEFORE you arrive.
- If you become sick while at work, STOP working, isolate yourself from others, inform your Supervisor, and go home as soon as possible, avoiding public transportation and taking measures to protect others around you.
- If you are ill/have symptoms do not come to campus/work. Ensure that you complete the Ontario COVID-19 Self-Assessment [2] and follow the direction given. Also, complete and submit the Employee Self Declaration Form [1].

For a complete list of COVID-19 related symptoms, refer to the Ministry of Health’s COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms [3].

What to bring

- In addition to the tools, parts and/or equipment required for the job, take the following with you:
  - Supplied cleaners / disinfectants
  - Disposable gloves for use in cleaning / disinfection
  - Non-medical face masks
  - Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol (optional)
- If an outbreak has been declared in the area or if anyone inside the unit has reported to be self-isolating, the following supplies and Droplet and Contact PPE will be required:
  - Droplet and Contact PPE which includes:
    - Surgical/procedure mask (medical mask)
    - Isolation gown (or acceptable alternatives)
    - Eye protection (goggles or face shield)
    - Disposable gloves
  - Supplied cleaners / disinfectants
  - Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
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Prior to starting the work, all Staff are to check

1. if Public Health has declared a COVID-19 “Outbreak” (i.e. one confirmed positive COVID-19 case) in the area; OR,
2. if anyone inside the unit is in self-isolation.

Current Public Health (PH) definition of an “Outbreak” in Student Residence is one confirmed positive COVID-19 case. An outbreak in Family Housing will be defined by PH. Likewise, PH will define the area of the outbreak (e.g., room, floor, building, etc.).

Self-isolation means individuals are either symptomatic OR have had close contact with a suspected, probable, or confirmed case of COVID-19 and have been directed to self-isolate by PH or a health care practitioner OR have travelled outside Canada in the past 14 days.

To determine if an outbreak (confirmed positive case) has been declared or if anyone inside the unit is in self-isolation review the “Student Housing Work Order”, check DAILY with the Front Residence Desk and/or communicate with Campus Police.

If YES to (1) OR (2), then:

- If it is not an emergency, investigate the possibility of delaying the work to a later date. Consult with your Supervisor/Manager.
- All employees that will perform work in an area that has a confirmed positive case or a unit with a self-isolating individual are required to wear the Droplet and Contact PPE (see section below for detail).
- Other precautionary measures listed in this document must also be strictly and meticulously followed.

If NO to (1) AND (2), the required PPE is a non-medical mask and disposable gloves (for cleaning / disinfection). Droplet and Contact PPE is not required but all other precautionary measures listed in this document must be followed. Please note that an individual may be self-monitoring. Self-monitoring means that the individual has been advised by PH to monitor their health for symptoms of COVID-19 and follow PH precautions (physical distancing, wearing a mask, hand hygiene etc.) but have not been required to self-isolate.

Note for Custodial Staff and Trades and Maintenance Staff: Please refer to Guiding Principles provided in Appendix A.

Droplet and Contact PPE

- Any employees who are required to enter a unit with a confirmed positive COVID-19 case or a unit with a self-isolating individual must wear the following PPE as a minimum:
  - Surgical/procedure mask (medical mask)
  - Isolation gown (or acceptable alternatives)
  - Disposable gloves
  - Eye protection (face shield or goggles)
- Prior to entry, all employees must be trained by Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) on how to put on and take off the PPE properly.
- PPE should be changed as soon as possible if it becomes damp, soiled or damaged.
- Disposable PPE such as surgical/procedure masks, disposable face shields, isolation gowns and gloves must be removed and disposed of immediately after use. The used PPE should be put in a garbage bag, which should be tied up with an “overhand knot” before it is placed in a lined garbage bin.
- Overhand Knot:
  1. Gather and twist tightly the unused top portion of the bag,
  2. Make loop with the twisted end,
  3. Loop the end through to create a knot.
- If the job task requires CSA-approved safety glasses, a face shield that is not CSA-approved must not be
used as a substitute.

- If the job task requires CSA-approved goggles, a face shield should not be used as a substitute even if CSA-approved.
- A surgical/procedure mask is meant to help prevent large-particle droplets and splashes from passing through the mask material.
- Droplet and Contact PPE is required for cleaning or doing repair work in all residence washrooms
- Please refer to [How to Put On and Take off Droplet and Contact PPE](https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr) [4].
Hand hygiene
If possible, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds immediately before you enter the unit, immediately after you leave the unit, and during donning and doffing of PPE as instructed.
- Dry your hands with a paper towel or with cloth towel that no one else will share.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.

If the residence is occupied, maintain physical distancing at all times

- Immediately after knocking on the front door or ringing the doorbell, take a few steps back to stay at least 2 metres away from the occupant who opens the door.
- Instruct the occupant (and the other occupants) in the unit to maintain at least 2-metre distance from you for entire duration of the work.
- If the work needs to be conducted in a room, you and the occupant should not be present in the same room as it is difficult to maintain a safe distance from each other. Kindly ask the occupant to leave the room until the work is finished.
Clean/disinfect the work surfaces before and after the work

- Immediately before the work begins, clean / disinfect the work surfaces that you are going to touch, using supplied cleaners / disinfectants, including the tools, tables, doorknobs, light switches, faucet handles, cabinet handles, etc.
- Immediately after the work is finished, clean or disinfect the work surfaces that you have touched.
- Follow the manufacturer’s guidelines on the use of the cleaning/ disinfection products and wear disposable gloves if needed (e.g., to avoid irritation on your skin). Follow appropriate steps to take off gloves in order to avoid skin contact with the outside of the gloves.
- Always wash your hands immediately after removing the gloves or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

Wear a non-medical mask

- A non-medical mask is required for routine work in occupied student residences and family housing units.
- The non-medical mask may be 2- or 3-layer and should
  - completely cover the nose, mouth and chin without gaping
  - allow for easy breathing
  - not contain an exhalation valve
  - fit securely to the head
  - fit comfortably to avoid frequent adjustments
  - maintain their shape after washing and drying
- When worn properly, a non-medical mask can reduce the spread of the wearer’s own infectious respiratory droplets.
- There is a theoretical basis as to why 3-layer non-medical masks may offer additional protection; however, there currently are no epidemiological studies evaluating the effectiveness of 3-layer vs 2-layer on COVID-19 transmission. See FAQs on Non-medical Masks from Public Health Ontario for further information.
- Review and follow PHAC’s instruction video on “How to wear a non-medical mask or face covering properly”.
- Follow the Public Health guideline on the use of non-medical masks, including the precautions below:
  - Consistently and strictly adhere to hand hygiene, physical distancing, and respiratory etiquette as described above as the mask alone will not prevent the spread of COVID-19.
Wash hands immediately before putting it on and immediately after taking it off (in addition to practicing good hand hygiene while wearing it).

- Individuals should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose and mouth when removing their mask and wash hands immediately or use hand sanitizer after removing.
- When removing the mask, grasp the ties or ear loops carefully without touching the front of the mask.
- Do not share the mask with others.
- Avoid touching the mask while using it.
- For a disposable mask, discard it, replace it as soon as it gets damp, soiled, or crumpled. Dispose of the mask properly in a lined garbage bin.

Respiratory etiquette when coughing or sneezing

- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or the bend of your arm, not your hand.
- Dispose of any tissues used as soon as possible in a waste bin and wash your hands afterwards.
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## Appendix A – Guiding Principles for Custodial Staff and Trades and Maintenance Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>COVID-19 Positive Cases OR Self Isolation Cases</th>
<th>Self Monitoring Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Living Spaces</td>
<td>• Routine work is not performed.</td>
<td>• Routine work is performed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples:</td>
<td>• Staff enters to perform work only in an emergency.</td>
<td>• PPE = Non-Medical Mask and Disposable Gloves for cleaning and disinfecting.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Management involved in guidance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washrooms</td>
<td>• PPE = Droplet and Contact PPE (for emergency work)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Routine work is performed.</td>
<td>• Routine work is performed.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Management involved in guidance.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• PPE = Droplet and Contact PPE</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence Common Spaces</td>
<td>• <strong>COVID-19 Positive Cases and self-isolating cases are not permitted to use these common spaces.</strong></td>
<td>• Routine work is performed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples:</td>
<td>• Routine work is performed.</td>
<td>• Management involved in guidance.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Notes:**

- **Emergency** = a situation that poses an immediate risk to life, safety, sanitization system operation, or significant damage or destruction to University property.
- **Self Monitoring Cases** = The individuals have been advised by Public Health (PH) to monitor their health for symptoms of COVID-19 and follow PH precautions (physical distancing, wearing a mask, hand hygiene, etc.) but have not been required to self-isolate.
- **Droplet and Contact PPE** = Surgical/procedure mask, isolation gowns (or acceptable alternatives), disposable gloves, and eye protection (goggles or face shield).

**Source URL:** [https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/about-hr/environmental-health-safety-ehs/ehs-programs-policies-guidelines-and-forms/ehs-15](https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/about-hr/environmental-health-safety-ehs/ehs-programs-policies-guidelines-and-forms/ehs-15)

**Links**

[1] [https://uoguelph.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6lh1bNRMHDEU1OR](https://uoguelph.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6lh1bNRMHDEU1OR)  
[4] [https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/about-hr/environmental-health-safety-ehs/ehs-programs-policies-guidelines-and-forms/ehs-19](https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/about-hr/environmental-health-safety-ehs/ehs-programs-policies-guidelines-and-forms/ehs-19)  