University Operations: Rebound & Recovery, Measures to Prevent COVID-19 in the Workplace

Measures to Prevent COVID-19 in the Workplace

The University is committed to supporting the health and safety of our students, staff and faculty. All measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 will be done in compliance with requirements under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, associated regulations and applicable directives from the public health agencies, as updated from time to time.

The University of Guelph's COVID-19 vaccination policy and daily screening requirements are on pause as of May 1, 2022. Masks continue to be required in all U of G – managed facilities until further notice. When masks are removed, such as for eating or drinking, individuals must maintain 2 metres (6 feet) physical distance.

Here are some general guidance and tips to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

- Do not come to work if you are sick.
- Practice proper hand hygiene.
- Practice respiratory etiquette when coughing or sneezing.
- Incorporate cleaning and disinfection of work areas.
- Use of a properly-fitting medical-style mask
- Use of eye protection, when appropriate.

Do not come to work if you are sick

- If you feel sick, DO NOT come to work and inform your supervisor.
- 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 or may have been exposed to COVID-19, do not come to campus/work. Ensure that you complete the Ontario COVID-19 Self-Assessment [1] and follow the directions given. Also complete and submit the University Employee Self-Declaration Form [2].
- If you have tested positive for COVID-19 or have COVID-19 related inquiries, call U of G COVID-19 Call Centre [3] at 519-824-4120, extension 53906. The call centre will guide you through the reporting process and will connect you with supports from Student Health Services or Occupational Health and Wellness as necessary. Refer to U of G webpage "What to do when you're sick or have been exposed" [4] for more information.

Practice proper hand hygiene

- Wash hands [5] frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer [6] with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Wash or sanitize hands at the start of shifts, before eating or drinking, before and after in-person meetings, after touching shared items, after using the washroom, and before leaving work.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed/unsanitized hands.
- Avoid high-touch areas, where possible, or clean/sanitize hands afterwards.
- Consider having hand sanitizer available for faculty, students and staff, in high touch areas (e.g., in front of elevators or stairwells) or in general reception areas.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact such as shaking hands or hugging.

Practice Respiratory etiquette when coughing or sneezing

- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or the bend of an arm, not into a hand.
- Dispose of any used tissues as soon as possible in a waste bin and wash hands afterwards.

Incorporate Cleaning and disinfection of work areas

- There is a low risk associated with COVID-19 transmission from touching a contaminated surface.
- From a COVID-19 transmissibility perspective, cleaning and disinfecting surfaces before and after use is no longer considered necessary. However, be mindful of high touch surfaces and always practice good hygiene.
- Cleaning/disinfection of public areas may be performed by Custodial Services for the Guelph Campus or through the use of an appropriate vendor at Ridgetown Campus and many Research Station locations. Personal workspaces can be regularly cleaned/disinfected by those that work in the area using appropriate cleaning products. Refer to Physical Resources website on "Cleaning Measures [7]".
- As a good practice, cleaning/disinfecting shared tools or equipment should be considered before use.
- Introduce more fresh air by opening windows where possible.

Use of Medical-Style Mask

- Faculty, staff and students are required to wear a medical-style mask at U of G locations. Cloth masks alone are not considered acceptable to wear at U of G locations, but may be layered over top of medical-style masks to help with fit. Public Health guidance indicates that medical masks provide more reliable protection from COVID-19 than non-medical masks. Medical – style masks must fit tightly to the face without gaping and completely cover the nose, mouth and chin. Refer to Environmental Health and Safety Guidance for Using Medical Masks [8] for further information.
- Medical masks are required in:
    - Classrooms, labs and learning spaces
    - Residence common areas
    - Designated workspaces (e.g., cubicles, offices, etc.) except when working alone in a private office with the door closed
    - Meeting rooms and shared spaces (e.g., lounges, study spaces, hallways, staircases, etc.)
    - Employee lunch/break rooms and kitchenettes, except when eating or drinking while maintaining 2 metres of distance
- Under certain limited circumstances, it may be acceptable to remove a mask while:
    - Working alone in a private office with the door closed
    - Eating or drinking while maintaining 2 metres of distance
    - Exercising in designated areas of the Athletics Centre
    - Outdoors and able to maintain 2 metres from others
    - Child under the age of 5
- Use of medical masks must not replace respirators required for performing the work safely (e.g., use of respirators by agricultural workers for spraying pesticides). Employees are expected to use the proper PPE as assigned.

Use of Eye Protection

- Eye protection (e.g., face shields or goggles) is not required for the majority of University of Guelph work situations, under the Provincial COVID-19 Reopening Ontario Act and regulations. The use of eye protection (face shields or goggles) and other personal protective equipment (PPE) has been established for certain employee groups in specific work settings These employees must follow established PPE requirements for their work areas and tasks.
- Re-usable eye protection such as face shields and goggles must be cleaned and disinfected between uses in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. Guidance on cleaning and disinfection of eye protection [9] is available on the EHS COVID-19 Guidelines Website.

Additional Resources to Prevent COVID-19 in the workplace

- Ontario Resources to Prevent COVID-19 in the Workplace [10]
- Ontario: What to do if You've Been Exposed to COVID-19 [11]
- CCOHS Pandemic (COVID-19) Tip sheets [12]
- Public Health Agency of Canada, Reducing COVID-19 risk in Community Settings: A Tool for Operators [13]
- University of Guelph, COVID-19 Tools and Resources [14]

Source URL:https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/about-hr/environmental-health-safety-ehs/ehs-programs-policies-guidelines-and-forms/ehs-5

Links
[1] https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/ [2] https://uoguelph.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8evYmTaJXnDkphP [3] https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-information/covid-19-call-centre/ [4] https://news.uoguelph.ca/return-to-campuses/i-have-tested-positive-for-covid-19-what-should-i-do/ [5] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9hjmqes72I [6] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDUJ4CAYhpA [7] https://www.pr.uoguelph.ca/cleaning-measures [8] https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/about-hr/environmental-health-safety-ehs/ehs-programs-policies-guidelines-and-forms/ehs-24 [9] https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/about-hr/environmental-health-safety-ehs/ehs-programs-policies-guidelines-and-forms/ehs-21 [10] https://www.ontario.ca/page/resources-prevent-covid-19-workplace [11] http://https://covid-19.ontario.ca/exposed [12] https://www.ccohs.ca/products/publications/covid19/ [13] https://health.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/reducing-covid-19-risk-community-settings-tool-operators.html [14] https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/covid-19-tools-and-resources