

Health and Safety Guideline

for Working on Campus During COVID-19 – Approved Essential Research and Other Essential Work Groups

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing (2m) remains the recommended work practice for all campus work locations.

In order to ensure physical distancing on-site, supervisors should consider:

- staggering start times
- staggering breaks
- staggering lunches
- restricting the number of people on-site and where they are assigned to work, looking at changing up the workspace where possible
- controlling site movement which may include one-way directional aisles
- limiting the number of people who use elevators at one time
- holding meetings virtually or in an outside or large space to enable physical distancing
- limiting unnecessary contact between workers and practising physical distancing where possible including breaks
- the installation of physical barriers (e.g. plexiglass shields) could be considered where practical and only if equipment and/or workstations cannot be separated by 2m

Employees who have concerns about physical distancing in their work environments need to talk to their supervisor and/or their Dean.

Hygiene Practices

Proper hygiene such as frequent and appropriate hand-washing and increased surface cleaning and sanitization of the workplace must be maintained. This is especially important in those public areas such as break rooms and lunchrooms.

- practice frequent and thorough hand hygiene (wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer)
- avoid touching your eyes, face and mouth
- avoid high touch areas where possible, or ensure that you practice hand hygiene after
- cough and sneeze into your sleeve
- workers who are ill should notify their supervisor
- encourage all individuals to stay home if sick and to contact [Telehealth Ontario](#) or [Public Health Ontario](#) for next steps

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

For those involved in chemical/biological use, the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) determines the type of gloves/eye protection you must wear. PPE requirements should be directly related to the risk of the task and only used after other control measures have been considered.

Specific to COVID-19;

- the first strategy should always be physical distancing and hygiene practices
- the use of respirators (i.e. N95 respirators) is not recommended except in healthcare settings

- workers who are exposed to people who are ill with respiratory symptoms (coughing and sneezing) may use face masks and eye protection
- gloves are only recommended when workers will be in direct contact with an ill person or a contaminated object or environment

Any questions relating to the use and need for additional PPE should be directed to EOHSS or the Faculty of Health Sciences Safety Office.

Cleaning and Sanitizing

Routine cleaning and disinfecting practices should be establishing in areas with high touch surfaces.

Workers should be discouraged from sharing work tools and encouraged to disinfect their tools after use.

Assess the need for additional sanitization of work surfaces prior to beginning work in high traffic/high touch areas.

Working Alone

Employees who are working alone on campus must have a working alone plan that is created with their supervisor. The plan must include procedures for obtaining assistance in the event of an emergency.

Supervisors are required to maintain regular contact with workers in order to discuss matters related to work, including safety. Supervisor check-ins (phone, email, etc.) should continue to be completed daily. Supervisors must also have safety procedures in place to ensure the well-being of workers who work alone or in isolation on campus. For additional information refer to [RMM: 304 Working Alone Program](#).

Emergency Preparedness

Individuals are still expected to exit the building in the event of a fire alarm. Physical distancing requirements should be followed upon exiting the building. This also includes when you are outside the building and awaiting emergency response and/or all clear to re-enter.

Hazardous Waste

Collection services for chemical and biohazardous waste continue on campus, however, scheduling has been reduced. Biohazardous waste is being removed once, weekly and chemical waste collection is scheduled on an as needed basis.

Chemical/Biological Material

Any materials covered under the WHMIS legislation are not to be removed from the University property.

These materials should not be ordered to an offsite location. Only essential research may continue at this time regardless of location.

Incident Reporting

All injuries, incidents and hazardous situations must be reported immediately to your supervisor. An [injury/incident report form](#) must be completed and sent to EOHSS (ehss@mcmaster.ca) or FHS Safety Office (fhso@mcmaster.ca) as soon as possible.(within 48 hours of injury).

The supervisor is responsible for investigating the incident and for ensuring corrective action to prevent a recurrence of the incident.

Note: Critical Injuries are to be reported immediately and the 48 hours is not applicable in this case. A definition of Critical Injury as defined by the Occupational Health and Safety Act can be found at the link below.

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/reporting-workplace-incidents-or-structural-hazards>

Training

Reminder that all individuals must complete the [training requirements](#) for the specific work that they are doing.

Resources

Environmental & Occupational Health Support Services (EOHSS) – ehss@mcmaster.ca

Faculty of Health Sciences Safety Office (FHSSO) – fhss@mcmaster.ca

Telehealth Ontario - <https://www.ontario.ca/page/get-medical-advice-telehealth-ontario>

Public Health Ontario - <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/>

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