

Hudson Valley Community College
COVID-19 Social Distancing and Personal Hygiene Protocols
Revision Date: – June 19, 2020

I. Introduction

Social distancing is a public health intervention used to reduce the likelihood of transmitting communicable diseases such as COVID-19. Social distancing involves reducing opportunities for exposure to potentially infected individuals through such measures as avoiding large gatherings, adhering to spacing requirements, minimizing interactions with others and following stringent personal hygiene practices. The use of social distancing to reduce exposure is an important and effective safety measure in the Hudson Valley Community College COVID-19 Re-Occupancy Safety Plan.

These protocols provide the college's requirements and recommendations for the effective use of social distancing measures, as well as recommendations for personal hygiene practices. It is expected that all employees, students, visitors and contractors will be courteous and respectful of each other's health and observe all measures contained in these protocols.

These protocols are in effect until further notice and subject to change as additional guidance becomes available.

II. Social Distancing Measures

A. Work Schedules

As much as is feasible, all college activity should continue remotely and employees that are able to work from home should continue to do so. When that is not feasible, the minimum number of employees necessary to perform the work function should report to site, up to the cap currently in effect for the college (i.e. 25%, 50%, or 75% of a department's employees.) Remote work will limit the density of people on site and make it easier to achieve the social distancing requirements described in this policy. It is recommended that occupancy increase gradually to allow for any concerns to be identified and resolved.

When activities do need to be conducted on site, scheduling strategies such as the following should be considered to reduce the opportunity for exposure as much as feasible:

- Staggered shifts and break times to reduce the number of employees at a time clock, break area or workspace at any one time
- Cohort shifts, i.e. the same employees working together in weekly rotations
- Appointment systems for students and visitors to minimize lines and crowding
 - Encourage phone check-in and waiting outside building or in cars

- Posting office protocol signs outside of office suites
 - Encourage visitors to call instead of entering
 - Request visitors to wear a mask if they must enter
- Providing materials for pick-up in wall-mounted holders outside of the department

B. Physical Distancing: Six-Foot Rule

Individuals must remain at least six feet apart from each other at all times, unless safety or the core activity of the work requires a shorter distance (e.g. operating cash registers, two-person lifts of heavy objects). As feasible, fixed workstations and routine work tasks should be redesigned to achieve this requirement. Redesigns should take into account the nature of the work and may include some of the following measures:

- Relocation of desks or fixed workstations to maintain six feet of distance from seated occupants in all directions
- Temporary or permanent relocations of individuals or department functions to spaces not in use
- Installation of cubicles or other three-sided enclosures in shared office spaces.
 - Cubicle height should be at least four feet for work performed while both occupants are seated
 - Cubicle height should be at least six feet for work performed while any occupant is standing
- Installation of Plexiglas barriers or “sneeze guards” at public-facing desks and service counters
 - Barriers should be at least four feet high for work performed while all parties are seated
 - Barriers should be at least six feet high for work performed while any party is standing
- Rearrangements or barriers should not block or inhibit emergency egress, corridors, aisles, or safe paths of travel
- Rearrangements or barriers should not cause any materials to be within 18 inches of the ceiling in buildings with fire sprinkler heads or 24 inches of the ceiling in buildings without sprinkler heads
- Barrier materials, other than Plexiglas desk shields, should be reviewed for applicable fire resistance ratings before purchase or installation
- Job rotation, office relocation or other methods should be used to achieve a six-foot distance until modifications can be completed
- An exception request may be submitted if safety or the core function of the work activity requires a shorter distance. Exception requests should be accompanied by justification and identification of other measures used to protect employees. Requests should be approved by the dean or director of the functional area and approved exceptions provided to EHS. Exceptions will be approved and solutions implemented as feasible.

- As feasible, chairs should be removed or tagged out in classrooms, laboratories, conference rooms, break areas and other locations where gatherings may occur.
- Non-essential common areas such as fitness rooms, lounges and game areas must remain closed until further notice.

C. Reduced Occupancy Limits

Reopening New York guidelines require the total number of occupants in a space to be limited to no more than 50% of the maximum occupancy of a particular area as set by the certificate of occupancy. Additionally, gatherings are limited to a maximum of 50 people, and a six-foot separation is required between individuals. In order to comply with all requirements, occupancy in any space should be limited to the lowest of the following at any time:

- 50% of the permitted capacity, for locations issued an operating permit for an Assembly Occupancy, such as certain lecture halls, auditoriums, dining areas, gathering and event spaces;
- 50% of a department's full staffing level;
- 50% of typical customer/visitor numbers;
- The maximum number that can be present in any room or space while maintaining a distance of six feet;
- 50 people in a single room or gathering.

Occupancy of any building or floor of any building is limited to 50% of permitted capacity. This should be readily achieved by maintaining the occupancy of each space within the limits above.

Revised occupancy limits must be determined and posted for instructional, assembly and dining spaces prior to their use. Seating and workstations should be rearranged or otherwise marked prior to use of these spaces. The occupancy limits of other spaces should be managed and maintained by the supervisor of the area.

These limits are expected to change during the recovery period, depending on the patterns of disease transmission in the community and updated guidance from regulatory authorities.

D. Signs and Markings

Temporary or permanent social distancing floor markers and signs must be posted in areas where crowding may occur or lines may form (e.g. time clocks, health screening stations, cash registers, service counters.) To reduce bi-directional foot traffic, signs and arrows are recommended for narrow, high-traffic aisles or hallways.

E. Meetings and Events

Meetings or other face-to-face contact should be avoided whenever possible. Employees, contractors, students and visitors are encouraged to use email, text messaging, telephone calls, conference calls or video conferencing instead of in-person meetings or conversations. Essential in-person meetings (e.g. hands-on training that cannot be done remotely) should be held outdoors whenever possible. Essential meetings must meet ALL of the following requirements:

- Maximum of 50 people
- Maintain a six-foot distance at all times
- All people must wear a face mask (not required if outside and other requirements are met)
- Meeting space should be cleaned and disinfected after use

Whenever possible, meeting spaces should be dedicated to a single department or group, and two hours of time should elapse between meetings.

F. Elevator Protocol

Elevators are typically small, enclosed spaces that frequently carry multiple people in close proximity to each other. Their use should be managed to reduce the potential for exposure to COVID-19.

- Individuals who are physically able to use stairs are encouraged to do so
- If possible, elevator use should be limited to a single occupant at a time
- The maximum capacity of any elevator is limited to two people at any time, except for family groups. A group of individuals from the same family are allowed up to 50% of the capacity of the elevator.
- Individuals over the age of two years old must wear a face covering while riding in the elevator unless not medically able to wear one.
- Individuals are encouraged to press the elevator buttons with an elbow or tissue and to wash their hands or use sanitizer after touching any surfaces
- Individuals must wait in line at a distance of six feet from each other. Floor markings should be placed as a guide at six-foot intervals.
- Signs should be posted at each elevator door with the revised elevator occupancy and the requirements of this protocol

G. Pick-up and Drop-Off Procedures

Wherever possible, handling of items should be done through the mail or a drive-up procedure. Drive-up procedures for picking up or returning items such as electronics or books should be developed and communicated to students, employees and visitors. Procedures should include measures to:

- Minimize the number of individuals involved
- Limit the use of shared objects such as pens or clipboards
- Consider the use of gloves if handling shared objects is necessary
- Limit face-to-face contact by remaining in cars and keeping windows closed
- Ensure all parties wear face masks when any face to face contact is necessary
- Disinfect any returning items or shared objects

III. Personal Hygiene Measures

All members of the campus community are encouraged to take the following personal hygiene measures to protect themselves and others:

- Avoid person-to-person contact such as shaking hands
- Avoid touching your face, nose, and mouth and avoid rubbing your eyes
- Practice proper coughing or sneezing etiquette
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer when handwashing is not possible
- Frequently disinfect high-touch surfaces in shared workspaces
- Properly dispose of anything that comes in contact with your mouth, such as tissues or plastic eating utensils
- Avoid coming in contact with individuals displaying symptoms of illness
- Do not congregate in work rooms, break areas, hallways, copier rooms or other areas where people socialize
- Eat at your desk or away from others. Bring your lunch or purchase take-out meals.
- Limit any sharing of foods, tools, equipment, or supplies
- Do not bring food or drink into labs or classrooms
- Wherever possible and safe to do so, increase ventilation of outdoor air by opening windows and doors. Fire doors can only be propped open if someone is continually present in the room.
- Avoid using public transportation during rush-hour crowding whenever possible (walk, cycle, or drive a car whenever possible.) Alternatively, if possible, adjust your schedule to commute early or late to avoid rush-hour crowding on public transportation.
- Use your elbow to touch light switches, elevator buttons, etc.
- When opening doors (especially bathroom or other public area doors) or touching other public surfaces, use a paper towel or tissue
- Avoid the use of water fountains
 - When possible, bring water from home, purchase bottled water from a vending station or use a hands-free water refill station available in the following locations: Campus Center (lobby), McDonough (lobby, fitness room area), BTC Auditorium (lobby), Fitzgibbons, Library (first floor), Science Center (near restrooms), Williams/Cogan (café area), Higbee (outside ITS Help Desk)

- When using a water fountain, it is a good practice to disinfect it before and after use and to fill a bottle or cup instead of drinking directly from the fountain.