



# Return-to-Workplace Guide

2020 Coronavirus Task Force  
[www.eastms.edu/coronavirus](http://www.eastms.edu/coronavirus)

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## Watch for Symptoms

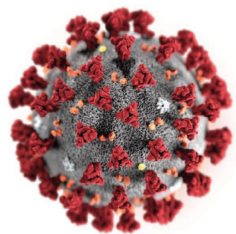
People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported—ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness.

Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus**. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

This list is not an exhaustive list of all possible symptoms. Other less common symptoms have been reported, including gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.





# MESSAGE FROM THE TASK FORCE

Dear Colleagues,

From the very beginning, our policies and protocols for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic have been rooted in safety for our students, our faculty, our staff and the greater communities we serve. The goals for East Mississippi Community College's response are to protect public health while continuing the institution's vital mission of education and outreach. To guide the process of planning for a phased return to on-campus operations, Dr. Alsobrooks convened an official task force comprised of a cross-section of employees to inform our policies.

Our plans are aligned with state and county orders and ordinances, as well as with Governor Tate Reeves' phased reopening model. Our plans also follow recommendations from the federal government, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and the [Mississippi Department of Health](#).

**Our knowledge and understanding of the COVID-19 virus continues to evolve, and our policies and plans will be updated as appropriate as more information becomes available.** This may not be a straight path forward. We likely will have some stops and starts, so your flexibility and understanding will be essential to our success.

This document is intended to be a guide for general college operations. Some units, such as food service, clinical instruction, etc., will require specialized policies and procedures not covered here.

If you have questions or comments about returning to the workplace, please consult with your supervisor or visit [EMCC COVID-19 website](#).



# RETURNING TO CAMPUS



# PHASED STAFFING PLANS

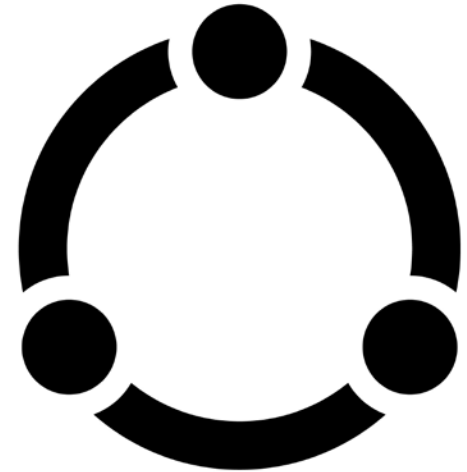
East Mississippi Community College will phase in a return of on-campus staff over time in a coordinated process to ensure appropriate physical distancing, availability of PPE (personal protective equipment), and adherence to public health guidelines for COVID-19.

Supervisors will assess expanded staffing/phases based on mission-critical operations, ability to control and manage specific work environments, and necessity to access on-site resources. **These decisions, once approved, will be communicated to you by your department head or dean.**

The need to reduce the number of people on campus (density) to meet physical distancing requirements will continue for some time—through three phases extending into the summer. Staff who can continue to effectively work remotely may continue to do so until the later phases.

Expanded staffing will be tightly controlled and coordinated to mitigate potential risks and ensure the safety of faculty and staff, as well as the communities we serve. **Once decisions to expand on-site staffing in certain areas have been made, staff should follow the policies and protocols detailed in this guide for returning to work on campus.**

As staff continue to return to campus, officials will closely monitor the potential spread of the virus, as well as existing policies and procedures to mitigate it. **If localized outbreaks emerge, tighter restrictions and reduced staffing may need to be implemented again.**





# PHASE-IN MILESTONES

**Until assigned to a phase by their supervisor, employees should continue to telecommute or work adjusted schedules as instructed.**

*\*Employees who may be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 or unable to return to work for any reason, may continue to telecommute until Phase III, with supervisor approval. Requests to telecommute beyond Phase III may invoke the interactive process under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), may require physician documentation, and may be assessed for a reasonable accommodation.*



## PHASE III\*

*Begins July 6, 2020*

**Up to 100%** of department personnel working on site, as instructed by supervisor.



## PHASE II

*Begins June 15, 2020*

**Up to 50%** of department personnel working on site, as instructed by supervisor.



## PHASE I

*Begins June 1, 2020*

**Up to 25%** of department personnel working on site, as instructed by supervisor.



# STAFFING OPTIONS

Once staff members have been instructed to return to campus, there are several options departments should consider to maintain required physical distancing measures and reduce population density within buildings and work spaces.

- **Remote Work:** Those who can work remotely to fulfill some or all of their work responsibilities may continue to do so *in the early phases* to reduce the number of individuals on campus and the potential spread of the COVID-19 virus. These arrangements, which should be approved by the immediate supervisor, may be done on a full or partial day/week schedule, as appropriate.
- **Alternating Days:** In order to limit the number of individuals and interactions among those on campus, departments should consider scheduling partial staffing on alternating days. Such schedules will help enable physical distancing, especially in areas with large common workspaces.
- **Staggered Reporting/Departing:** The beginning and end of the workday typically bring many people together at common entry/exit points of buildings. Staggering reporting and departure times by at least 30 minutes will reduce traffic in common areas to meet physical distancing requirements.



# HEALTH & SAFETY GUIDANCE





# PERSONAL SAFETY PRACTICES

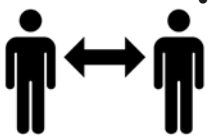
All employees must adhere to the following preventative actions.

## Wash your hands often.



- **Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds**, especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 70% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Hand sanitizer stations will be available throughout university buildings.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

## Avoid close contact.



- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, and put distance between yourself and others. It is difficult to tell who may be sick as many people are asymptomatic, so the CDC recommends acting as though everyone you have contact with is positive for COVID-19 and **staying at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people.**
- Avoid shaking hands.
- Do not enter other employees' personal workspaces.
- Reduce high-touch exposures by propping open interior doors where feasible.
- Do not gather in groups.

## Cover your mouth and nose with a face covering when around others.

- **Always wear a face covering in any work situation where you cannot adequately physically distance yourself from others.** Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The face covering is not a substitute for physical distancing.



The college has a limited supply of disposable masks available for employee use. Employees are encouraged bring their own reusable face coverings from home, if desired.

Wear a face covering when you go out of your personal workspace. **The face covering is meant to protect other people in case you are infected.** You could spread COVID-19 even if you do not feel sick.

- N95 and similar respirators should be reserved for medical workers and employees in other areas with task-specific hazards. Please do not use this type of face covering.

## Monitoring your symptoms.



- If you are in a private setting and do not have on your face covering, remember to always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues in the trash.
- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 70% alcohol.
- **Stay home if you are sick.** Sick employees may be asked to provide a doctor's note allowing the employee to return to work on site.
- Employees and students are encouraged to watch for symptoms of COVID-19, take their temperature before arriving on campus, and utilize the Self Check tool available on the CDC website to monitor potential symptoms.



## Clean and disinfect.

- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.
  - **Staff will be provided disinfectant spray and are expected to use it daily on high-touch surfaces.** These areas include, but are not limited to the following: entryway touchpoints, doorknobs, water fountains, elevator panels/call buttons, stairwell handrails and restroom fixtures (sinks, faucets, toilets, towel dispensers, etc.).
  - Minimize the sharing of office equipment to the greatest extent possible. **Supervisors should make cleaning and disinfecting supplies available to employees and ensure frequent wiping down of office common spaces,** including countertops, conference tables and chairs, light switches, drawer handles, phones and copiers.
  - **Individual employees should take care of any additional desired cleaning in their personal workspaces,** including wiping down their desks, tables, phones, keyboards, light switches, etc.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has a [list of products that meet its criteria](#) for use against the virus that causes COVID-19. When EPA-approved disinfectants are not available, alternative disinfectants can be used (for example, 1/3 cup of bleach added to 1 gallon of water, or 70% alcohol solutions). Do not mix bleach or other cleaning and disinfection products together. This can cause fumes that may be very dangerous to breathe in. Bleach solutions will be effective for disinfection up to 24 hours.



# SPECIFIC SITUATIONS



## Working in Office Environments

If you work in an open environment, be sure to maintain at least 6 feet of distance from co-workers. If possible, have at least one workspace separating you from another co-worker. You should wear a face covering at all times while in a shared workspace/room.

Departments should assess open work environments and meeting rooms to institute measures to physically separate and increase distance between employees, other co-workers and customers, such as:

- Place **visual cues** such as floor decals, colored tape or signs to indicate to customers where they should stand while waiting in line.
- Place **one-way directional signage** for large open workspaces with multiple through-ways to increase distance between employees moving through the space.
- **Designate specific stairways for up or down traffic** if building space allows.

If you work in an office, no more than one person should be in the same room unless the required 6 feet of distancing can be consistently maintained. **If more than one person is in a room, masks/face coverings should be worn at all times.** A mask or face covering is not required if you are working alone in a confined office space (does not include partitioned work areas in a large open environment).

**Masks/face coverings should be worn by any staff in a reception/receiving area.** Masks/face coverings should be used when inside any facility where others are present, including walking in narrow hallways where others travel, and in break rooms, conference rooms and other meeting locations.



## Restrooms

Use of restrooms should be limited based on size to ensure at least 6 feet of distance between individuals. Wash your hands thoroughly afterward to reduce the potential transmission of the virus.

## Elevators

**Due to physical distancing requirements, no more than 1-2 people should be in an elevator at a time**, so please use the stairs whenever possible. If you are using the elevator, wear your mask or face covering and avoid touching the elevator buttons with your exposed hand/fingers, if possible. Wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers upon departing the elevator.

## Meetings

Convening in groups increases the risk of viral transmission. **Meetings should be held in whole or part using the extensive range of available collaboration tools** (e.g. Microsoft Teams, Zoom, telephone, etc.).

**In-person meetings are limited to the restrictions of local, state and federal orders and should not exceed 50 percent of a room's capacity, assuming individuals can still maintain 6 feet of separation for physical distancing requirements.** Departments should remove or rearrange chairs and tables or add visual cue marks in meeting rooms to support physical distancing practices between attendees. All attendees should wear a mask or face covering while sharing space in a common room.

During your time on site, you are encouraged to communicate with your co-workers as needed by e-mail, instant message, telephone or other available technology, rather than face-to-face.





## Meals

Before and after eating, you should wash your hands thoroughly to reduce the potential transmission of the virus. Employees are encouraged to take food back to their office area or eat outside, if this is reasonable, to limit traffic in the kitchens and break rooms.

**Office kitchens and break rooms may not be used for communal gathering or dining in at this time.** After using communal appliances, employees are asked to wipe them down following use. Use of communal coffee pots and water foundations is discouraged.

## Building Access

All buildings will continue to be secured to limit entry to employees only until further notice. Do not hold or prop open exterior doors for any person. No visitors or guests will be permitted in college building through Phase I and perhaps longer. Each facility should designate separate entry and exit doors. Doors will be propped open where possible to reduce the number of interactions with physical surfaces requiring hand contact for entry/exit.

## Business and Personal Travel

All non-essential business travel is currently prohibited. In order for an employee to travel, prior approval from the President will be required. If campus to campus travel, college vehicles are permitted; however, to ensure proper distancing, only one employee is allowed per vehicle.

