

Update effective: July 1, 2024 (revised 7/11/24)

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON RESPIRATORY ILLNESS HEALTH AND SAFETY PLAN

The purpose of the University of Washington's (UW) Respiratory Illness Health and Safety Plan ("University Plan") is to reduce the potential for COVID-19 and other respiratory virus transmission at University locations and to align with federal, state and local workplace safety requirements and public health guidance. This plan is updated as regulations and guidance change.

This University Plan is a supplement to the [UW Accident Prevention Plan](#). As applicable, worksite-specific prevention practices should be included in the unit's Supplemental Accident Prevention Plan.

UW Medicine medical facility personnel follow UW Medicine policies and procedures.

1. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following units and roles have responsibilities for respiratory illness and health and safety in the workplace.

UNIVERSITY CENTRAL ROLE: EXECUTIVE OFFICE

- Approve University-level policies and guidelines for respiratory illness prevention.
- Lead and coordinate University-wide response to respiratory illness outbreaks including deployment of the [Advisory Committee on Communicable Diseases](#) (ACCD) and the [Emergency Operations Center](#) (EOC) as needed.
- Assess University-wide liability and risks.

UNIVERSITY CENTRAL ROLE: UW FACILITIES

(Includes Housing & Food Services and Facilities at UW Seattle, Bothell, and Tacoma)

- Perform regular building operations and maintenance, including cleaning, and disinfection of common areas/high-touch surfaces.
- Manage University-wide transportation and parking.
- Maintain University buildings and systems, including HVAC systems.
- Train and coordinate University building coordinators.

UNIVERSITY CENTRAL ROLE: ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY (EH&S)

- Develop University-wide respiratory illness policies, plans, safety training, and

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guidance documents.

- Review, evaluate, and communicate any new or revised federal, state, and local requirements, and update policies and procedures accordingly.
- Facilitate and administer the University's Advisory Committee on Communicable Diseases (ACCD).
- Provide consultation and assist units and personnel with health and safety measures.
- Respond to health and safety concerns and suspected respiratory virus outbreaks.
- Maintain the OSHA 300 Log requirements for tracking cases of reported COVID-19 workplace transmission.

UNIT LEADER (DIRECT REPORT TO PRESIDENT OR PROVOST)

A University unit is a unit or campus with an administrator reporting directly to the President or Provost. This includes UW Bothell, UW Tacoma, and UW Medicine.

- Ensure the acquisition of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning supplies, and other supplies for the unit.
- Consult with EH&S as needed.
- Oversee the development and implementation of any unit or site-specific respiratory illness policies and guidance.
- Develop strategies to communicate with personnel, personnel supervisors, and building coordinator(s) to keep up to date with changes to respiratory virus guidelines, regulations, and University policies.

PERSONNEL SUPERVISOR

- Review the Health and Safety Plan with personnel, as part of the [Supplemental Accident Prevention Plan](#) training.
- Enforce face covering requirements per the [UW Face Covering Policy](#) in clinical/healthcare situations and locations where they are required.
- Report safety concerns, including suspected workplace outbreaks of respiratory viruses to EH&S.
- Address or escalate reported or observed safety concerns to a unit leader or to [EH&S](#).
- Report workplace transmission cases of COVID-19 to EH&S via the [Online Accident Reporting System \(OARS\)](#).

PERSONNEL

Personnel includes staff, faculty and other academic personnel, students in the workplace, and student employees as defined in [UW Administrative Policy Statement 40.1](#).



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- Follow all elements of this Health and Safety Plan and any unit or site-specific requirements.
- Follow the [UW Public Health Flowchart for COVID-19 and Respiratory Virus Symptoms](#) if you have symptoms or test positive for COVID-19.
- Follow all requirements in the UW [Face Covering Policy](#) in the clinical/healthcare locations and scenarios where it applies.
- Report safety concerns to a supervisor or to [EH&S](#).

BUILDING COORDINATOR

- Distribute information and updates to building occupants related to respiratory virus prevention measures.
- Post University respiratory virus prevention posters as advised by EH&S.
- Attend information and coordinating sessions organized by UW Facilities.

2. PLAN ELEMENTS

The elements of the University's Health and Safety Plan:

- [Vaccination](#)
- [Procedures for sick individuals and reporting work-related COVID-19 illness](#)
- [Clean surfaces](#)
- [Face coverings, personal protective equipment \(PPE\), other risk reduction strategies](#)
- [Training](#)



A. VACCINATION

University personnel and students are strongly encouraged to be up-to-date on their vaccinations for [COVID-19](#), [seasonal influenza](#), other [routine vaccinations](#) that apply to their age and risk group (e.g., Tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough (Tdap); measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)).

UW Medicine medical facility personnel are required to follow the UW Medicine Healthcare Worker Immunization Program.

Students working or training in UW Medicine clinical or other settings, including students participating in the [Health Sciences Immunization Program \(HSIP\)](#), follow HSIP's COVID-19 vaccination requirements.

B. PROCEDURES FOR SICK INDIVIDUALS & REPORTING WORK-RELATED COVID-19 ILLNESS

University units are required to take measures to prevent sick personnel from entering the worksite, and must [report](#) work-related COVID-19 illness to EH&S.

Follow the [Public Health Flowchart for COVID-19 and Respiratory Virus Symptoms](#), which outlines the University's requirements, procedures, and what to do when you are sick.

Additional information can be found on the [COVID-19 Illness and Exposure Guidance webpage](#) on the EH&S website.

Reporting work-related COVID-19 illness

Report your positive test result to EH&S *if you suspect you were infected with COVID-19 while at work*; this report must be submitted through the UW [Online Accident Reporting System \(OARS\)](#). EH&S may follow up with individuals to confirm an exposure occurred in the workplace.

If supervisors have reason to believe that their workforce is experiencing an outbreak of COVID-19 or a respiratory illness (as a guide, more than 10% of unit personnel are out sick and have tested positive), [contact EH&S](#) for assistance.

Human Resources assistance

UW Human Resources and the Office of Academic Personnel provide resources for [staff](#) and [academic personnel](#) regarding time away from work; talk with your human resources consultant or academic human resources business partner about issues pertaining to your work area.

Guidance for seeking a disability accommodation is available on the [UW Human Resources website](#).

C. CLEAN SURFACES

University units are encouraged to clean (and disinfect as needed) their worksite surfaces regularly in accordance with the University's [Communicable Disease Cleaning Protocol](#).

Units are required to provide cleaning and disinfection products, along with the appropriate PPE and instructions for the frequency and safe use of products.

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University custodial units clean high-touch surfaces in common areas of buildings, such as restrooms and stairwells.

Safe use of products: Follow the manufacturer's instructions for use of all cleaning and disinfecting products, and use personal protective equipment as required.

Use one of the following to disinfect hard, non-porous surfaces:

- [EPA-registered disinfectant for use against SARS-CoV-2](#) or
- Alcohol solution with at least 70% alcohol or
- Freshly prepared [bleach/water solution](#).

Avoid putting disinfectant gels or liquids on electronics, including elevator buttons, unless they have been indicated as safe for those devices.

D. FACE COVERINGS, PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE), OTHER RISK REDUCTION STRATEGIES

All individuals at a University healthcare or clinical location, including personnel, students, contractors, vendors, and visitors, are required to follow the [UW COVID-19 Face Covering Policy](#) to ensure the health and safety of the University campus community and the public utilizing these spaces.

Face covering requirements in UW healthcare facilities and clinical spaces settings will align with those in place for UW Medicine medical facility personnel. They will be based on respiratory virus transmission (i.e., COVID-19, flu, and RSV) metrics. Face covering requirements will change depending on these metrics, local public health guidance, and the current season. Follow the signs posted upon entry to clinics.

It is recommended that personnel and students wear a well-fitted face covering when returning to campus after being sick with COVID-19 or another respiratory virus illness, and after a COVID-19 [exposure](#) for the time period noted in the [Public Health Flowchart](#).

When you wear a mask, choose a [well-fitted, high-quality mask](#), which when worn helps protect you and those around you.

UW personnel voluntarily wearing a respirator in the workplace are required to be provided with [advisory information from L&I](#).

Guidelines on the selection of other personal protective equipment that may be needed to reduce the potential for exposure based on specific job duties can be found in the [EH&S Guidelines for Personal Protective Equipment](#).

Additional risk reduction strategies

Units are encouraged to evaluate whether additional strategies are needed in their work settings based on their likelihood of exposure to COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses, such as in healthcare, during overnight assignments, or in other higher risk settings.

Some additional strategies are listed below:



1. Use **engineering controls** (e.g., exhaust ventilation, physical barriers).
2. Implement additional **testing protocols** for higher risk activities (e.g., overnight assignments).
3. Optimize indoor **ventilation** as much as possible.
4. When possible, **physical distancing** is recommended, but not required, in indoor crowded settings in areas that are not well ventilated.
5. In areas of low occupancy, follow the University's [Working Alone Safely](#) guidelines.
6. Event organizers and venue operators follow **Public Health Precautions** detailed in the [Campus Event Safety](#) guidance on the EH&S website.

E. TRAINING

Units are required to provide personnel with the contents of this Health & Safety Plan and as applicable, any unit-specific requirements or procedures.

As an additional resource, COVID-19 safety information is available in 36 languages from the [Washington State L&I COVID-19 Resources](#) webpage.

Hazard communication training for personnel working with disinfectants

Supervisors are required to communicate the potential hazards and safety measures to personnel working with chemical disinfectants prior to use. Chemical disinfectant exposure may cause health issues if used improperly. Information about working safely with disinfectants is available on the EH&S website:

- [COVID-19 Chemical Disinfectant Safety Information](#)
- [Guidelines for Personal Protective Equipment](#)

Visit the [Chemical Hazard Communication](#) webpage on the EH&S website for additional information about communicating chemical safety.

3. RESOURCES

1. [CDC: Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
2. [UW EH&S: COVID-19 Health & Safety](#)
3. [Washington State Department of Health: COVID-19](#)
4. [L&I: Basic COVID-19 Requirements for All Workplaces](#)

Please [contact EH&S](#) for assistance.