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Guiding Principles

At the University of Massachusetts, the health and safety of our employees is our highest priority. The UMass President’s Office (UMPO) planning approach for COVID-19 response and returning to on-site locations is deeply rooted in ensuring that all decisions are made with best interests of employees in mind.

The approach for returning to on-site locations outlined in this document has been informed by national and local guidance, as well as an On-Site Transition Team (OTT). The OTT includes employee representation from across the UMPO and has taken an active and inclusive approach to identifying and addressing the questions, needs and considerations identified by our staff. The content of this guide has been informed by more than 400 questions and considerations submitted by employees to the OTT.

Throughout this pandemic, the UMPO has been closely consulting with state and local public health authorities and has been proactively incorporating health and safety guidelines from those bodies, as well as those from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other experts, to ensure the safest possible approach for returning to on-site locations.

The UMPO understands that employees have many individual needs and challenges outside of the workplace, that each person's situation is unique, and we are dedicated to ensuring a thoughtful and flexible approach that considers the needs of the employees during this difficult time.

For any concerns that are not addressed within this guide, you are encouraged to reach out to your supervisor or the Human Resources team.

Knowledge and understanding of COVID-19 continues to evolve, and UMPO plans and protocols will be updated as needed to reflect any changes.
**Phased Return**

In accordance with Federal guidelines and the Commonwealth's approach to reopening, the UMPO has determined that a phased return is the most appropriate method to support a safe and steady transition back to our worksites. The UMPO staff will return to worksites over time through a coordinated process to protect our employees and provide for a safe work environment that ensures appropriate social distancing and availability of supplies.

At this time, exact timeframes for each phase cannot be established as transitions to phases will be based on relevant guidelines and criteria established by public health and governmental authorities.

This guide is focused on Phase One. The need to maintain reduced on-site staffing to meet social distancing requirements is expected to continue for some time. During Phase One, employees that can continue to effectively work remotely will continue to do so in accordance with relevant national and state guidelines. However, there may be employees who perform critical business functions that cannot be performed remotely. **All employees who will need to return in Phase One due to the critical nature of their work have been contacted by the Human Resources Office.**

UMPO will continually assess whether to expand on-site staffing and progress to the next phase; decisions to progress will be based on operational needs, ability to implement public health guidelines and necessity to access on-site resources. Recommendations to progress to Phase Two are being developed by the OTT and presented to management for approval.

The implementation of each phase will be tightly controlled and coordinated to mitigate potential risks and ensure the safety of employees. During Phase One, no department should increase staffing beyond current levels without approval from management through the OTT. When decisions to implement additional phases are made, employees should follow the updated protocols detailed in updates to this guide for returning to worksites.

The UMPO will continue to communicate more information as it becomes available.
Guidance for Returning Employees
The health and safety of our employees is our top priority, and the UMPO will strictly adhere to the guidelines issued by the CDC, Massachusetts Department of Public Health and other relevant public health authorities.

The CDC-issued guidance for preventing illness includes:

- Washing your hands frequently
- Avoid close contact by practicing social distancing of at least six feet, or roughly two arms lengths
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces frequently

Additional resources from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health:

- Stop the Spread of Germs like Seasonal Flu and COVID-19
- Help Prevent COVID–19 with Social Distancing
- How to Safely Cover Your Face Outside of Home

Employee Expectations for Return to On-Site Locations
Employees who are returning to on-site locations must adhere to the following protocols:

Health Monitoring

Daily monitoring of one’s health and well-being prior to coming to work can aid in early detection of COVID-19 and is an effective measure to prevent community spread. The symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever (temperature over 100.4°F) without having taken any fever reducing medications
- Loss of Smell or Taste
- Cough
- Muscle Aches
- Sore Throat
- Shortness of Breath
- Chills
- Headache
- Gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite
In our ongoing effort to protect on-site employees, we ask that employees conduct a daily self-check before going to work. You can find the checklist at umass.info/self-check.

Any employee who meets the criteria in the checklist and/or begins experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should not report to work, should contact their healthcare provider, and should contact Katie Temple in Human Resources at 774-455-7571 or ktemple@umassp.edu.

COVID-19 Positive Employee

UMPO has adopted the CDC’s release from isolation guidance as its return to work guidance. Therefore, employees who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 must adhere to the following return-to-work protocol:

• **Employees who have not had a test** to determine if they are still contagious may be cleared to return to work if they meet all of the following criteria:
  – No fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers)
  – Other symptoms have improved (for example, symptoms of cough or shortness of breath have improved)
  – At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared

• **Employees who have had a test** to determine if they are still contagious may be cleared to return to work if they meet all of the following criteria:
  – They no longer have a fever (without the use of medicine that reduces fevers)
  – Other symptoms have improved (for example, symptoms of cough or shortness of breath have improved)
  – Received two negative tests in a row, at least 24 hours apart. Their doctor will follow CDC guidelines.

Social Distancing

Employees are required to practice social distancing of at least six feet, and UMPO will take steps to limit personal interactions to the greatest possible extent.
Face Coverings

In accordance with guidelines from the CDC and the Massachusetts Department of Health, employees must wear face coverings when they are not able to social distance, including in walking common spaces like hallways, restrooms, equipment areas and kitchens. Employees are expected to provide their own face coverings (as individuals are required by the Governor’s Executive Order to wear face coverings in public locations), but UMPO will have disposable masks available should an employee forget their face covering at home or have a need to change their face covering during the course of the day.

Proper Personal Hygiene

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze. Use a tissue or your inner elbow, not your hands. Dispose of all used tissues in a wastebasket.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Clean things that are frequently touched.

Meetings and External Guest Restrictions

In order to maintain the safest possible work environment, employees are not permitted to host in-person meetings, seminars or conferences. All such gatherings must be held using alternatives such as conference calls, Zoom, WebEx, etc., or must be cancelled. Conference Rooms are restricted at both Shrewsbury and Beacon locations. External guests will not be permitted in Phase One.
Guidance for Employees with Elevated Risk, or Who are Living in Elevated Risk Households

According to the CDC, “COVID-19 is a new disease and there is limited information regarding risk factors for severe disease. Based on currently available information and clinical expertise, older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.”

The CDC categorizes high-risk individuals as:

- People 65 or older
- People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility
- People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, including:
  - Chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
  - Serious heart conditions
  - Immunocompromised individuals
  - Severe obesity (BMI of 40 or higher)
  - Diabetes
  - Chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
  - Liver disease

If you, or a member of your household, falls into one of these categories, please reach out to Katie Temple in Human Resources at 774-455-7571 or ktemple@umassp.edu to discuss your options. You may be required to provide documentation to support placement into a high-risk category.

Travel Restrictions

All international, out-of-state, and non-essential in-state university-related travel for President’s Office employees is not permitted at this time.

We strongly encourage you to avoid personal travel and review applicable travel warnings.

Employees who choose to engage in personal travel should review the “Traveler’s Health Notices” that can be found at wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel. Employees should be advised that travel to certain locations may result in the need for the employee to self-quarantine upon his/her return in accordance with state and CDC recommendations.
**Exposure Protocols**

If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, have been exposed to an individual with COVID-19 or have been diagnosed with the virus, contact your primary care physician immediately.

The UMPO will take appropriate action if and when notified of an employee who has tested positive for COVID-19. Infected employees will be consulted and asked to identify all individuals who worked in proximity (within six feet) for a prolonged period of time (approximately 15 minutes) with them during the 48-hours before the onset of symptoms.

In the event of a positive COVID-19 case, the UMPO will work with the local Board of Health (LBOH) to trace and send home all employees who came into contact with the infected employee for 14 days to isolate and self-quarantine in accordance with CDC guidance. While in quarantine, individuals are advised to self-monitor for symptoms, avoid contact with high-risk individuals, and seek medical attention if symptoms develop. UMPO will follow state and CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting the workplace, including all areas used by the diagnosed employee.

**Reporting a Potential COVID-19 Case**

If you believe that another employee has been exposed to or has contracted COVID-19, promptly contact Jacquie Kittler at 774-455-7559 or jkittler@umassp.edu. **Do not share the employee’s information with any other colleagues.** Doing so would be a violation of their privacy, which is protected by HIPAA and other laws.
Facilities Considerations

Because each office building has a mixed population of tenants, UMPO facilities staff will coordinate with the respective building management entities on implementing local, state and federal public health guidance.

Enhanced Cleaning

Property managers will continue to undertake their daily cleaning schedules, which include frequent disinfecting of high-touch points, and will adhere to state guidance and best practices issued by the CDC. See facility-specific guidance below for specific information for each location.

Supplies

UMPO has also taken additional measures to ensure that each work location has sufficient supplies to accommodate on-site employees. Such supplies may include disinfecting wipes or sprays, hand sanitizer or wipes, disposable surgical masks, gloves and tissues. Supplies will be distributed with limited contact with employees.

Workspace Preparation

To prepare worksite locations for return of staff, UMPO has formed a team that will go on-site to prepare the offices before Phase I employees return. This process will also include an IT services and equipment checks to ensure adequate functionality of equipment for all Phase One employees.
Additional Support Considerations

Portable Devices

For those who do not already have access to them, portable computer devices are available for staff upon request. All requests should be routed through your supervisor.

Noncontact or Low-Contact Support

The University Information Technology Services Team is currently developing guidelines for offering limited contact support and will share that upon completion. Any such guidelines will be in place prior to a critical mass of employees returning to the office.

Common Areas

Common areas will be restricted as much as possible following state and federal guidelines.

Mail Distribution

All mail will be distributed with minimal contact. Currently, the UMPO is only accepting packages that are critical to business or our COVID-19 response.

Non-Essential Onsite Services

The university's courier service is currently suspended.
Boston - One Beacon Street

Cleaning

At One Beacon Street, high traffic common areas will be cleaned continually throughout the day. Building management (CBRE) has hired a full-time staff member whose sole duty is to clean high traffic areas, from the lobby to the top of building including elevators, door handles, buttons, and other frequently touched surfaces. Cleaning personal workstations or personal affects will be the sole responsibility of the employee.

Access to shared equipment will be largely restricted, except business-critical equipment.

Entering and Exiting

Employees can still enter or exit from both sides of the building. All UMass employees are required to wear a face covering when entering the building.

Things to note on your return:

- There are two lanes of turnstiles at each entry to the elevator bays on the lobby level. Each lane will be designated as either an entry lane or an exit lane only.
- OBS is following social distancing guidelines at the Security Desk, elevator bays and the lobby itself. Appropriate signage will be placed within the facility.
- Elevator Access – Security will attempt to limit the capacity on the elevators to four (4) per elevator.
- Further, queuing lines for the elevators will be set up prior to entry through the turnstiles in order to allow for social distancing. Floor signage will be easily visible.
Building Amenities

Rebecca’s Café is anticipating a mid- to late-June reopening on a limited basis. When it does reopen, breakfast and lunch will be available with a limited menu on a grab-and-go basis only.

The One Beacon Fitness Center is currently closed. It is tentatively scheduled to reopen in Phase 3 of the Reopening Massachusetts Plan issued by Governor Baker.

The convenience store will re-open with an enforced limit of one customer in the store at a time.

Valet Parking is suspended. Only current contracted monthly parkers will be allowed access to the garage due to limited capacity within the garage.

**Shrewsbury - 333 South Street**

**Cleaning**

An enhanced cleaning schedule will remain in effect with additional cleaning and disinfecting of high touch areas and common areas. Employees are responsible for cleaning and disinfecting individual workspaces and departmental common areas. Access to shared equipment will be largely restricted, except business-critical equipment.

**Entering and Exiting**

All UMass employees are required to wear a face covering when entering the building. Employees will enter through main entrance. If you don't have a mask, you can pick one up at the front desk security. The north lobby and employee entrance located next to the loading docks on the 2nd floor are locked. Employees are still be able to leave through these doors but will not be able to enter the building through them.

**Building Amenities**

The cafeteria and gym are closed until further notice.

**Data Center**

Biometrics are still required for entry and exit to the Data Center. Individuals with access to the Data Center are responsible for wiping down the area when done.
Employee Resources

It is entirely appropriate to experience feelings of stress, anxiety and fear during this crisis. If you are, know that you are not alone, and there are a number of resources available to you.

The Employee Assistance Program (ComPsych) has created an online toolkit that includes a wide variety of information and can assist employees with personal, work and life issues. This toolkit is available at: pages.e2ma.net/pages/1807892/20932.

Group Insurance Commission (GIC) Resources

The GIC also provides resources to help its members cope with the COVID-19 Pandemic. Those resources are available at: www.mass.gov/info-details/gic-health-benefits-and-the-covid-19-outbreak.

Employee Benefits

Under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), which includes the new federal Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA) and the new federal Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act (EFMLEA), employees are entitled to paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave for reasons directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Department of Labor’s (Department) Wage and Hour Division (WHD) administers and enforces the new paid leave provisions, and the agency website remains the best source of information related to the FFCRA. For more information, please go to the agency’s website at www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-employer-paid-leave.

For more details on this, please reach out to Katie Temple at ktemple@umassp.edu.
Looking Forward

As we’ve seen, this situation will require all of us to adapt our behavior out of consideration for those around us. The UMPO greatly appreciates your consideration of all of our relevant safety precautions and we thank you for your flexibility in the weeks and months to come.

As this situation continues to evolve, the university will continue to provide periodic updates, seek input and implement any measures that are necessary to improve the health and safety of our employees.

Thank you for all that you do for the university.

All UMass President’s Office updates are available at: www.umassp.edu/hr/covid-19.