

Employee Guidance for COVID-19 Response

Introduction

It is the primary goal of Covenant College to keep our employees as safe as possible. As we work together in this “new normal” it is understandable that employees are concerned about safety as well as the changes to our policies and procedures. Let’s remember to extend grace and kindness to each other as we care for our neighbor in these unprecedented times.

General Safety

- All employees who have been instructed to return to the workplace must conduct **symptom monitoring** as listed in the Covenant Commitment every day before reporting to work. Specific screening questions can be found [here](#).
- **Face masks/coverings** must be worn when indoors in public areas including, but not limited to, lobbies, hallways, restrooms and conference rooms. When alone in a private office or room, face coverings are not required. Face coverings are required outdoors when six foot distancing cannot be maintained. *Best practice remains that face coverings are most effective when combined with physical distancing, regular screening, and hygienic care. Employees in shared offices should work with their supervisor and co-workers to establish appropriate distancing of desks and physical barriers in the office space where all will feel comfortable without a mask in the shared office space. Any employee that feels uncomfortable at any time should notify his/her manager or Human Resources.*
- **Wash your hands** frequently or use hand sanitizer if soap and water isn’t available and avoid touching your face.
- Practice good **respiratory etiquette** and cover your nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing.
- If you work in an **open environment**, be sure to maintain at least 6 feet distance from coworkers. If possible, have at least one workspace separating you from another coworker.
- Where feasible, **meetings** should be held in whole or part using available collaboration tools (ie Zoom, Google Meet, telephone, etc.). Those not talking or presenting their screens should mute video to conserve bandwidth. Meetings may take place outdoors, if so chosen.
- If meeting in conference/collaboration rooms or in other communal areas be sure to space accordingly.
- Employees should eliminate any **shared-use** items such as coffee pots and the practice of sharing food in common areas. The practice of disinfecting the handles of departmental microwaves and refrigerators after each use should be encouraged.

- Common and high traffic areas will be cleaned by Facilities Services, however, personal offices and workstations should be cleaned by employees. This includes trash removal. Vacuuming and incidental cleaning can be requested through the electronic work request system. In support of this endeavor, custodial closets will remain open for employees to access cleaning supplies. Hand sanitizers for individual use should be provided by each employee.
- **Business travel remains restricted to essential travel only** and needs to be approved by an employee's immediate supervisor.
- **Regarding personal travel**, employees are encouraged to use wisdom and follow the recommendations from the [CDC](#), as well as, local and state health departments. Employees traveling should follow the recommendations that are in the place in each area they are traveling to in order to determine if a quarantine is recommended or necessary. If employees have any specific questions regarding travel they should contact Human Resources.

COVID-19 Response

Inform the College:

- Employees who feel ill should notify their immediate supervisor per our employee handbook and not report to work. If you have already reported to work and begin to feel sick, you should notify your supervisor and go home immediately.
- Employees who have been exposed to someone who has tested positive to COVID-19 must not report to work, inform Human Resources, contact their health care provider, and follow all directives given by public health officials.
- Employees are considered exposed to COVID-19 if the employee has had contact for **more than 15 minutes** while **less than 6 ft.** apart during a **48 hour window** prior to symptom onset with a person who has obtained a **positive** test result for COVID-19.
- **Returning to Work:** Exposed employees may not return to work until 14 days after their last exposure.
- **Workplace Exposure:** If the College determines via contact tracing that an employee has been exposed at work, the College will inform the employee of their exposure while maintaining confidentiality.

Who is in the Known-Risk Category?

Those in the known risk category will be able to check off at least one of the following boxes:

- **You live in the same household** as someone with a laboratory-confirmed or clinically compatible COVID-19 case.
- **You have had close contact** with a laboratory-confirmed or clinically compatible COVID-19 infected person. Close contact applies to anyone who has been within 6 feet

of an infected person. Also note that the longer that contact period lasts, the greater the risk.

- **You are providing care** in a non-healthcare setting (such as a home) to someone with a laboratory-confirmed or clinically compatible COVID-19 case, and you are not able to follow recommended precautions.

What You Should Do

If you fall in the known-risk category, you'll need to monitor your symptoms while also preventing the possible spread of COVID-19. The CDC recommends the following [precautions](#):

- **Stay home.** Self-quarantine in your home for 14 days after the date the person with COVID-19 began home isolation. If you live with others, maintain a physical distance of at least 6 feet at all times. Also, be extra cautious around those who are at a higher risk for severe illness. If you are unable to avoid continued close contact due to providing direct care to the family member/person who is sick, you should avoid contact with others outside the home. Also, you will need to quarantine for 14 days after the person who has COVID-19 meets the [criteria to end home isolation](#).
- **Monitor your symptoms.** Monitor your health for 14 days after the last date of potential exposure. Check your temperature twice a day and watch out for tell-tale signs of COVID-19 like cough and shortness of breath.

Return-to-Work Plan for Employees Testing Positive for COVID-19

Employees with confirmed COVID should NOT return to campus without first contacting Human Resources.

Employee with confirmed COVID-19, showing illness, but not requiring hospitalization

Employees will be able to return to the workplace only after meeting the following conditions: (CDC requirements met for discontinuing isolation)

1. At least 10 days have passed since the onset of their symptoms and their symptoms have improved.
And
2. Employees have had no fever for at least 24 hours without fever reducing medication.
3. Please note: If you were placed under home isolation due to a laboratory-confirmed positive test result but have not had symptoms, you may return to work following CDC guidelines (when at least 10 days have passed since the date of your first positive diagnostic test).

Employee with confirmed COVID-19 and requiring hospitalization

1. Per CDC guidelines, this employee would require testing before returning to the workplace.

2. These employees would also require written documentation from their healthcare provider that they are approved to return to the workplace.

Key Takeaways

There is currently no vaccine, cure, or antiviral treatment for COVID-19, which is why it is more important than ever to do your part in stopping the virus from spreading and protecting yourself from getting sick.

- **Protect, prevent, and prepare—don't panic.** While you should take the risks of COVID-19 seriously, panicking isn't a constructive response. Instead, focus on actionable steps you can take to protect yourself, prevent the spread of COVID-19, and prepare for a potential outbreak in your community.
- **Protect yourself.** Protect yourself from COVID-19 by washing your hands regularly and thoroughly with soap and water. Disinfect frequently touched surfaces, and avoid touching your mouth, nose, or eyes with unwashed hands. Also, avoid close contact with others who are sick.
- **Protect others.** Cover your mouth with a tissue or the crook of your elbow when you cough or sneeze. Wear a mask. Maintain six feet of distance whenever possible. Continue to wash your hands with soap and water often and for at least 20 seconds. Stay home when you're sick, and monitor your symptoms. Also, call ahead to your doctor and seek medical care if you experience symptoms of COVID-19 or think you've been exposed to the virus.