

# **DEOHS return to work policy (Final: May 8, 2020)**

## **Introduction**

Washington state has made substantial progress with respect to reducing the transmission of Covid 19 and is now beginning to develop plans for individuals to return to work. DEOHS has developed this Covid 19 return to work policy for all DEOHS employees. This policy reflects guidance provided by EH&S, the UW Office of Research and DOSH. The return to in person work plan is presented as follows.

## **Overall Approach**

- Any staff able to work from home must continue to work from home to the extent possible.
- Only employees that have been designated as “critical personnel” in Workday are permitted to work on site at UW facilities.
- Many staff may prefer to continue to work from home due to the ongoing risk of Covid19 transmission. PIs and supervisors cannot require staff to work on site, it is still the case that no one can be pressured to carry out on-site research if they are concerned about their safety, the safety of others, or if they have home-care obligations.
- Groups seeking to return to or continue on-site work will need to submit a request to the Assistant Chair for faculty Research and Engagement, together with a “Return to in person research health and safety plan”, that among other items, indicates who is allowed to return to work and their work schedule. Refer to the DEOHS Covid19/Research Portal page for guidance on these plans.
- Designated leaders (i.e. PIs and supervisors) will provide oversight of their group and ensure their group’s compliance with this policy.
- Employees will need to continually assess their health as well as potential for being infective.
- Protocols and procedures for moving about and using common areas must be followed.
- A building management team has been constituted to implement this policy.

## **Employees Permitted to Return to Work**

- Employee has been designated as “critical personnel” in Workday.
- Employee has been granted permission to work on site by group manager and (for employees based in the Roosevelt building) by the building management team.
- Employee has read, understood and agreed to follow the return to work requirements.
- Employee has reviewed training guide on how to properly don and doff protective masks.
- Employees are expected to closely monitor their health and are not permitted to come to work if they have had Covid19 or flu-like symptoms (fever, chills, cough, loss of taste or smell, shortness of breath, or other respiratory symptoms) during the past 14 days.
- Employees are not permitted to come to work if during the past 14 days they had been in close contact with someone diagnosed with Covid19.
- Employees will sign, in Workday, a daily attestation that they are free of Covid19 or flu-like symptoms and also, to the best of their knowledge, have not had close contact with an individual diagnosed with Covid19. Supervisors are required to review these attestations each day.

### **Group Return to Work Plan Elements ([see the following checklist](#))**

Each work group will complete a brief Return to in person research health and safety plan that addresses the following:

- Name of designated Covid19 supervisor for your group (this person is responsible for ensuring implementation of their group's Return to in person research health and safety plan. By default, it would be the PI or group leader, if not otherwise designated)
- Names of employees allowed to return to work and proposed work schedule.
- Assurance that employees in primary work area can and will remain six feet apart.
- Number of people that will be allowed in each room and area of each room. These occupancy numbers will also be posted on all shared-use rooms.
- Implementation plan for a staggered work schedule if the number of people assigned to a given room doesn't allow the six foot rule to be consistently maintained.
  - Consider moving equipment, key work stations or other activities that may limit the ability of workers' to maintain six foot separation.
- Surface disinfection plan for the group's common work areas will be developed. The plan will include surfaces to be routinely disinfected, disinfection frequency and person(s) responsible for implementing the plan.
- All shared equipment must be disinfected before and after each use.
- Request for variance of six foot rule for specific tasks accompanied with rationale for need and plan to provide additional worker protections.
- Building management team will review and approve each plan, and also provide feedback, especially in regards to worker density in shared work areas and requests for a variance regarding the six foot rule
- The group leader will maintain compliance of the Covid 19 prevention plan within the group's assigned work space

### **Distancing Practices**

- Employees will be expected to maintain six foot social distancing in their assigned work area and when moving about the building or using common areas.
- Employees are expected to step aside to allow another individual using a corridor, stairway, elevator, or similar constricted area to pass by, six feet away, before proceeding.
- At Roosevelt, restrooms will be limited to use by no more than two people at a time (except for single occupancy restrooms)
- At Roosevelt, restroom stalls and urinals will be taken out of service to accommodate the six foot rule. For example, only the right urinal and left stall would be available for use in the second floor men's room.
- At Roosevelt, the lunchroom will be arranged to maintain the six foot rule with designated lunch areas being clearly demarcated. Employees are required to sanitize the table area where they eat lunch before and after eating with the sanitizer product provided.
- A lunchroom schedule will be developed if demand for this area exceeds capacity.
- People unaffiliated with Roosevelt, except for those making deliveries, or servicing equipment are not allowed to enter the building without prior permission from building management.

### **Hygiene Practices**

- Employees are required to wear a surgical mask in UW buildings at all times, unless they are alone in their assigned private office. Face masks are required at all other times including: moving about the building, using the bathrooms, lunch areas and conference rooms, even if they are the only person present.
- Face mask use is also encouraged when leaving UW buildings for any errands, especially when visiting other commercial establishments.
- Face masks will be made available in the Roosevelt 1<sup>st</sup> floor lobby where individuals can procure up to one week's supply. Employees must wear a new mask each day, and dispose of the used masks each day. When inside UW buildings building, employees may only wear DEOHS-supplied masks.
- When moving about common areas, workers are encouraged to limit touching surfaces to the greatest extent possible.
- Employees should frequently wash or sanitize their hands. Hand washing/sanitization is required after entering the building, returning to assigned work areas from another building location, or after completing any surface disinfection activities.
- For employees stationed at Roosevelt, hand sanitizing stations will be set-up at the front desk and at other locations.

### **Surface Disinfection**

- Building management will oversee custodial staff operations responsible for disinfecting surfaces that are routinely contacted in common areas. Such surfaces would include hand railings, door handles, water fountain taps, and bathroom surfaces.
- Common area surfaces will be thoroughly disinfected every evening. Additionally, at Roosevelt, common area surfaces will be thoroughly disinfected four times per day.
- Each group will maintain responsibility for disinfecting surfaces in the work areas used by their group. Surface disinfection would focus on surfaces that are routinely touched including door handles, lab equipment, shared workstations and other surfaces identified in the group's plan.
- Protective gloves are to be worn by individuals engaged in surface disinfection with gloves being disposed after cleaning is finished followed by the individual washing or hand sanitizing their hands
- Contact Michael Treptor to request surface disinfectant, paper towels and protective gloves.

### **Distancing and Hygiene Practices Away from Work**

- Preventing Covid 19 infectivity at work is to a great extent dependent on individuals continuing to implement best practices when not at work.
- Employees working at on site will be required to follow the state's social distancing requirements.
- DEOHS employees working on site will also be expected to wear face mask protection whenever they are inside other buildings away from work, with the exception of home.
- Employees are encouraged to minimize exposure to others during their work commute by relying on walking, cycling or a single occupancy vehicle. Use of public transportation should be avoided to the greatest extent possible.

### **Covid 19 Illness or Positive Test**

- If a person using the building becomes ill with Covid 19 or tests positive for Covid 19, they should immediately inform the supervisor and EH&S Employee Health Center at [emphlth@uw.edu](mailto:emphlth@uw.edu) or 206-685-1026. EH&S will evaluate the specific locations where the person spent time on campus for enhanced cleaning and disinfection.
  - See FAQ at <https://www.washington.edu/coronavirus/#health> which provides details of how UW responds to confirmed or suspected COVID19 cases. Note that by law, personal health information is private so UW is not allowed to name individuals who are test positive for Covid19.
- The infected individual's assigned work area will be immediately closed and only reopened after EH&S has completed their evaluation.
- If needed, a contact tracing plan will be implemented by UW EH&S.

### **Covid 19 Infection Prevention Plan Oversight**

- A building management team will oversee the Covid 19 return to work policy.
- Oversight will include review and approval of group plans and ensuring worker density in group work areas doesn't preclude social distancing guidelines.
- As more workers return, the Roosevelt building management team will continually assess the effect of increasing worker density on the ability to maintain social distancing in common areas.
- For employees stationed at Roosevelt, a system will be put in place to tabulate building occupancy levels. The check-in system will be online for DEOHS staff/students; and a paper form at front desk for visitors.
- PIs and unit managers have primary responsibility for ensuring their staff comply with this policy.
- The building management team will also ensure individuals follow the social distancing and hygiene protocol, address concerns, and address situations where individuals are not complying with the protocol. This may entail random building walkthroughs.
  - DEOHS leadership may revoke the "critical personnel" status of individuals who fail to comply with this policy, or revoke the return-to-work approval for laboratories or units that fail to, or are unable to, fully comply with this policy.
  - Employees are encouraged to anonymously report concerns regarding unsafe work practices or non-compliance with this policy at [ehcovid@uw.edu](mailto:ehcovid@uw.edu).