

Employee Working on Campus – Health and Safety Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- 1) Do I need an N95 respirator to perform my daily tasks?

If your daily tasks did not previously require the use of a N95 respirator as protection for your routine work, then you do not need one.

- 2) What if I want to obtain an N95 respirator even if it isn't required?

Unfortunately, due to the global shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) associated with the pandemic, supplier distribution of critical COVID-19 PPE is being prioritized for health care providers and first responders. However, per the governor's guidance, Penn State is providing all employees whose responsibilities necessitate working on campus with cloth masks.

- 3) Do I need gloves to perform my daily tasks?

If your daily tasks did not previously require the use of gloves as protection during your routine work or were not defined by unit procedures, then you do not need them.

The best preventive measure for on-campus employees remains frequent hand-washing. After performing the necessary work tasks, don't touch your face and wash your hands for at least 20 seconds.

- 4) How will I know if someone on campus has been infected with the COVID-19 virus?

Penn State Environmental Health and Safety (EHS), in coordination with University Health Services and Human Resources, has developed reporting protocols related to COVID-19 cases (suspected or confirmed) [on Penn State campuses](#). Supervisors working with facility coordinators will identify and restrict access to affected locations based on a risk assessment approach. Those areas deemed restricted entry will be marked with signage alerting employees. Supervisors will need to assess if other employees in the area came into "close contact" or "shared contact" with the suspected COVID-19 case. If employees have come into "close contact" or "shared contact" with the ill individual, those employees will be notified, per the instructions for supervisors who are responding to reported COVID-19 cases.

- 5) What should I do to protect myself when entering buildings – touching door handles, light switches, handrails, elevator buttons, faucets, etc.?

High-traffic areas within buildings are having frequently touched surfaces like restrooms, handrails and door handles disinfected routinely, using an EPA-approved disinfectant, following enhanced cleaning protocols that are in place.

The best preventive measure for on-campus employees remains frequent hand-washing. After entering a building to perform the necessary tasks, don't touch your face, and wash your hands for at least 20 seconds periodically while working in the building.

- 6) Some tasks require co-workers to be within the recommended 6-foot physical distancing; how can we maintain our protection?

If the task must be completed, do so without touching your face, wear a [cloth mask](#), and immediately wash your hands when the task is complete. For tasks that will require substantial time to complete (more than one hour), work with your supervisor to discuss the best approach and take breaks to wash your hands.

- 7) How does my work unit get hard surface cleaning products from the University?
Contact your academic/work unit safety officer, supervisor or facility representative to obtain the necessary cleaning supplies. All product labeling/use instructions should be followed when using any type of hard surface cleaner – overuse is not necessary and can waste limited resources. Cleaning solutions are available and individual spray bottles should be reused.
- 8) Should we clean shared workspaces on a more frequent basis than daily?
As long as physical distancing can be maintained and employees are not using the same workstations or equipment, it is not necessary to clean these areas more frequently.

If employees throughout the workday are required to utilize the same workstations or equipment to perform their functions, then work areas should be cleaned more frequently and in between users. Review the proper cleaning schedule, supplies and procedure with your supervisor.
- 9) Is it safe to be on campus outdoors, if physical distancing is followed?
Although we are still learning how the virus spreads, employees required to be on-campus due to their job task should follow physical distancing and preventive measures anywhere on campus.
- 10) Should University vehicles be disinfected on a regular basis?
Due to the limited number of employees on our campuses, vehicles should be dedicated to single employee use. In situations where that is not possible, the high-contact surfaces should be cleaned using the University's hard surface cleaning guidance.
- 11) How do I know if a co-worker might be infected even if they are not expressing signs of being sick?
According to the CDC, people may be able to spread the virus even if they are not showing any symptoms, therefore, please follow the [preventive measures](#) recommended by the University at all times while on campus. These include maintaining physical distancing, washing your hands often, wearing a cloth mask, and establishing cleaning procedures for common touch points with your supervisor.
- 12) Should I be wearing a cloth/general mask while on campus?
According to the [Pennsylvania Department of Health, all should be using some type of covering](#). The University will provide cloth masks to employees whose responsibilities necessitate working on campus in accordance with the guidance issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Health. In addition, please refer to the University's [cloth mask guidance](#) document for proper use and care.

If you have access to cloth masks from home, they must meet the guidance outlined by the [CDC](#) and [Pennsylvania Department of Health](#) for cloth face coverings.