

The background of the entire page is a nighttime photograph of a modern building. The building has a prominent central tower with a glass facade and a white dome on top. The interior lights of the building are on, and the sky is dark. The text "A GUIDE FOR RETURNING TO THE WORKPLACE" is overlaid on the lower half of the image in a large, white, bold font.

**A GUIDE FOR  
RETURNING  
TO THE  
WORKPLACE**

# *Guide for Returning to the Workplace*

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## **Introduction**

Robert Morris University's protocols, practices and overall strategy to reopen the campus are based on our efforts to create a safe environment for our students, faculty, staff, and community. Our ultimate goal is to balance our primary concern for the safety of all campus constituents with our mission of providing a vibrant, on-campus learning and living environment for the students we serve. Our strategies will be no more or less restrictive than necessary to support both of those critical interests.

The university's plans will also be aligned and consistent with the local orders and ordinances pronounced by Allegheny County, as well as the phased reopening model set forth in Governor Wolf's "Plan for Pennsylvania." Moreover, our plans will track recommendations made by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Pennsylvania Department of Public Health, and the Allegheny Department of Health, as well as "Preliminary Guidance for Resuming In-Person Instruction at Postsecondary Education Institutions and Adult Education Programs," which can be found [here](#).

Our knowledge and understanding of the COVID-19 virus continues to evolve, and all relevant policies, protocols, practices, and plans will be updated as appropriate as additional information becomes available.

## **Workplace Expectations & Guidelines:**

Our collective success relies upon our cooperation and collaboration in following the lawful and reasonable guidelines set forth herein, which are all based upon federal, state, and/or local mandates. We appreciate your professionalism, patience, and collegiality as we navigate these uncharted waters, and ask that you remain engaged and feel free to reach out to your departmental leaders and/or Human Resources with any questions.

The university will maintain a communication plan with all students, faculty, staff, and visitors, informing them of the latest safety and health information including; administrative controls/physical distancing requirements, hygiene practices, personal protective equipment (e.g. face masks), monitoring & surveillance (e.g. temperature checks, testing and tracing [if applicable]), as well as other best practices and information/education mechanisms.

## **Symptom Monitoring & Reporting Requirement:**

Employees who have been instructed or permitted to physically return to the workplace must monitor their symptoms daily before reporting to work. Any staff or faculty member experiencing any symptoms potentially related to COVID-19 (noted below) should stay home

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and contact their personal health care provider or the MyHealth@School Center at (412) 397-6221 for guidance. This may include a recommendation for COVID-19 testing, advice on personal care, and instruction on when it is appropriate to return to campus. Benefit-eligible employees may also find it useful to refer to the COVID-19 symptom checker feature available on the HealthJoy app.

Staff needing to stay home for COVID-19 related symptoms should inform their supervisor via email or telephone, and should also send an email to [humanresources@rmu.edu](mailto:humanresources@rmu.edu). Faculty who need to stay home for COVID-19 related symptoms should contact their department head via email or telephone and should also send an email to [humanresources@rmu.edu](mailto:humanresources@rmu.edu). This will allow the university to watch for trends and assist with possible contact tracing.

Remote work may be permitted when feasible, and the employee feels well enough to work, but is exhibiting one or more of the following symptoms.

At this time, possible COVID-19 symptoms include one or more of the following:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

For more information concerning [COVID-19 symptoms](#), please refer to the CDC. Individuals may also utilize the CDC's "[Self-Checker](#)" to assist in making decisions in regards to seeking medical attention.

## **Information on Vulnerable Populations:**

According to the CDC, individuals with certain conditions may have a higher risk for COVID-19 infection. Those conditions may include:

- Older adults (aged 65 years and older)
- People with HIV
- Asthma (moderate-to-severe)
- Chronic lung disease

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- Diabetes
- Serious heart conditions
- Chronic kidney disease (and undergoing dialysis)
- Severe obesity (BMI of 40 or higher)
- Being immunocompromised

It is critical that we all comply with the guidelines herein not only for our own health and safety, but also for the health and safety of our colleagues, students, and community members who are more vulnerable to infection. The university will consult guidance from the CDC on an ongoing basis to assist us in understanding the categories of employees, students, and visitors at higher risk for severe illness. This information can be found on the CDC's website.

Once a vaccine is available, the university will implement an incentive-based program to encourage vaccination. RMU, along with the CDC, also strongly encourages employees to get their flu shot when it becomes available in the Fall. RMU currently offers an incentive to eligible staff and faculty in the form of a contribution to their Health Savings Account or Flexible Savings Account in exchange for receiving an annual flu shot. Flu shots will be made available to all staff and faculty at the *MyHealth@School* Center.

The university will consult guidance from the American College Health Association, the CDC, and the American Academy of Pediatrics regarding COVID-19 vaccination requirements and/or recommendations when available.

All employees will receive a copy of the *Reopening RMU: Health and Safety Plan* when it becomes available.

*Please note that individuals falling into any of the categories listed above who believe that their health prevents them from coming to campus to perform their jobs (including faculty members who believe they are unable to perform face-to-face instruction due to a health-related condition) should contact Human Resources. Human Resources will then provide those employees with guidance on how to request leave and/or other accommodation pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act, and/or short-term disability. Having one or more of the conditions that place one at higher risk for infection does not automatically mean that an employee having that condition is eligible for accommodation - each request will be reviewed on an individualized basis and in accordance with applicable law.*

## Temperature Checks

A fever (body temperature over 100.4 °F) or a low-grade fever (body temperature between 98.6 °F and 100.4 °F) that gradually increases is a common symptom linked to COVID-19. Therefore, from time to time, employees may be asked to submit to random temperature checks throughout the work day at RMU.



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## **Staffing Models**

The need to decrease the number of people on campus to meet physical distancing requirements will continue and may vary based on most up-to-date guidance received from the government. Areas that can continue to effectively work remotely will likely continue to do so until restrictions are eased for larger gatherings.

Once staff members who have been instructed to do so return to work on-site, consideration for the below options should be taken by departmental leaders to maintain physical distancing best practices:

- **Remote Work**: Those who can work remotely to fulfill some or all of their work responsibilities should continue to do so to reduce the number of individuals on campus and the potential spread of the COVID-19 virus. (To this end, a formal staff remote work policy will be forthcoming.)
- **Alternating Days**: In order to limit the number of individuals and interactions among those on campus, departments should consider scheduling partial staffing on alternating days to eliminate having too many staff members in shared office space at once.
- **Staggered Reporting/Departing**: When possible, adjusting reporting and departure times by at least 30 minutes is suggested, as it will assist with reducing traffic and having too many people in common areas at once.

Implementation of the above staffing models will be made at a departmental level, and the adoption of any of these models must be approved by departmental leadership.

## **Staff or Faculty COVID-19 Related Leaves**

Staff members exhibiting COVID-like symptoms will be granted leave from the time of symptom onset to a minimum of 72 hours after symptom resolution. In addition to their PTO entitlement, full-time staff members will be granted an additional two weeks of COVID-19 emergency leave between June 1, 2020 and May 31, 2021, for use as needed. Faculty members experiencing COVID-like symptoms will be provided collegial coverage of their classes as necessary.

Any employee seeking a COVID-related medical leave or a COVID-related accommodation pursuant to the Americans With Disabilities Act is required to contact UPMC WorkPartners at (833) 851-5184. Employees may contact Human Resources for assistance in initiating this process or for more information on the Americans With Disabilities Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act, and Short-Term Disability.

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## **Training**

Prior to the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester, all students and employees will be required to participate in a video training on best practices for staying healthy and avoiding viral spread. The video will serve to reinforce the themes of this guide and help educate students and employees on measures to protect health and prevent the spread of a COVID-19. Participants will learn how to prepare for a pandemic, what to be aware of, how to prevent contracting and spreading viruses, and how to assist the RMU community during the pandemic.

Employees and students will be encouraged to adopt the proposed strategies as their daily routine. In addition, students and employees will be encouraged to use their calendar feature on cell phones to track daily activities, locations, and encounters with others – whether it be a formal meeting with a professor, or an informal coffee break with friends – as sources of contact tracing if needed.

## **Visitors to Campus**

Generally speaking, visits from approved individuals who are not current RMU students, faculty or staff members will be required to stop at Barry Center upon their arrival to campus. At that time, they will be provided with a parking permit and face mask or covering (if they do not have one of their own.) Visitors who have pre-arranged their visits (such as prospective students who have scheduled their visits through the Enrollment Office, for example) need not stop at Barry Center so long as 1) they have their own masks; and 2) they have already received a parking pass.

Visitors will be required to follow RMU protocols for masking and physical distancing.

## **Health and Safety in the Workplace**

### **COVID-19 Contact Tracing**

RMU has chosen to utilize NOVID, an innovative new contact tracing app that uses ultrasound technology to more accurately follow people's exposure to COVID-19. This app can anonymously and reliably trace people's exposure to the virus. It works by allowing users to self-report when they have tested positive for the virus without requiring or recording any personal information. Instead, it periodically senses how close a user is to another anonymous person who also is using the app. By sensing these interactions, NOVID can use chains of contact to detect and alert someone if they previously encountered anyone who recently self-reported a positive case, or anyone who previously came into contact with someone who recently self-reported, while keeping all identities anonymous.



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Although employees' use of NOVID is voluntary, an efficient contact tracing system depends on a relationship of trust within the university community, which in turn fosters optimum cooperation. Building confidence among students, faculty and staff to ensure cooperation with contact tracing teams is critical to the referral of symptomatic contacts to designated isolation facilities. The Colonial Coronavirus Corps—a group of volunteers composed of RMU retirees, current faculty/staff, spouses, and students—will be up to the challenge. Involving appropriate external community members and stakeholders (in particular, local leaders) in contact tracing will also prove helpful. The local surveillance and community volunteers will be involved as early as possible in the response.

### **COVID-19 Testing**

Faculty and staff who develop COVID-19 symptoms will be referred to the *MyHealth@School* Center for a phone screening/triage and/or their health care providers as appropriate. Centralized outpatient testing is offered at various UPMC locations.

## **Personal Safety Guidelines**

### **Face masks**

All students, faculty, staff and visitors to the campus are required to wear a face mask or face covering when in the presence of others, and in public settings where other physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain. This includes common spaces, conference rooms, and classrooms. As appropriate, this requirement will be adjusted in accordance with current and evolving guidance from governing agencies (CDC, DOH, ACHD, etc.). Effective use of face masks or coverings is critical in minimizing risks to those around you. Please remember that COVID-19 can be spread even by individuals who do not feel particularly ill. Visitors to campus will also be required to wear a mask. A disposable mask will be provided to those visitors who do not bring their own.

RMU will make a cloth mask available to employees and students who need one. Employees, students and visitors are also free to wear their own masks as well, so long as they cover the nose and mouth and comply with the CDC recommendations set forth in the link under the "Use and Care of Face Masks" section below. Commercially manufactured disposable masks may be used (and will be made available by the university upon request), but must be discarded into the trash after being worn for one day. Cloth face masks or face coverings may also be used for a day at a time, but must be properly laundered prior to being used again. Having a week's supply of cloth face coverings helps to reduce the need for daily laundering.

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## Use and Care of Face Masks

For details regarding cloth face coverings, including how to create, wear, and care for home-made face coverings, please visit the [CDC website](#).

Before handling your face covering or disposable mask, please wash your hands or use hand sanitizer. Ensure that your face mask fits over the nose and under the chin. Arrange the face covering/disposable mask properly with the nose wire snug against the nose (where applicable). Tie or fasten straps behind the head and neck, or loop around the ears. Avoid touching the front of the face covering/mask throughout this process.

When removing the face covering/disposable mask, avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Loop your finger into the strap and pull it away from your ear, or untie the straps. Wash your hands immediately after removing your face covering or mask.

Cloth face coverings should be washed after each use. They should also be laundered with regular clothing detergent before first use, and after each shift or day worked. Face masks/coverings should be replaced immediately if soiled, damaged (punctured, ripped, etc.), or visibly contaminated.

## Gloves

Facilities, Residence Life, RMU Police, Health Services and similar functions should wear disposable gloves while completing certain tasks, working in high touch areas and when entering students' rooms/residence halls. Gloves will be provided by the university. According to the CDC, gloves are not necessary for general use and do not replace good hand hygiene (i.e. washing your hands often).

## Physical Distancing

Physical distancing is one of the simplest yet most effective ways of avoiding exposure to COVID-19 and slowing the spread of the virus. Since the virus can be spread by people who are not aware they are sick, it is important to keep your distance from others when possible, even if you do not feel ill. Physical distancing is important for everyone, but especially to help protect those at higher risk of becoming very ill if infected. Thus, employees are asked to **maintain a minimum distance of six feet** from other people at all times. This includes office space, common areas, and classrooms.

## Handwashing

You should wash your hands, often, with soap and water. You should lather with soap and water for at least twenty seconds each time you wash your hands. This is particularly important after spending time in a common area or public space, before and after preparing or eating

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food, and after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, or touching your face. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands with the sanitizer and rub them together until they feel dry. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth, and wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after touching your face. For a more in-depth guide to handwashing, please follow the CDC [guidelines](#).

### **Coughing/Sneezing Hygiene**

Always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or the inside of your elbow when you cough or sneeze – even if you are in a private setting and are not wearing your mask or face covering. Throw the used tissue in the trash. Wash your hands afterwards for at least 20 seconds as described above. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. You can help stop the spread of germs that make you and others sick by practicing good [cough and sneeze etiquette](#) provided by the CDC.

### **Cleaning/Disinfection**

Although Environmental Services will continue to clean workspaces in accordance with CDC [guidelines for disinfection protocols](#), employees are encouraged to clean/disinfect high-touch areas before and after use (such as desks, printers, copies, computers, door handles, light switches, coffee makers, water coolers, etc.).

## **Guidance for Specific Workplace Scenarios**

### **Working in Office Environments**

If you work in an office, two or more people should only be in the same room if the required six feet of physical distancing can be consistently maintained. If two or more people are in the same room, masks/face coverings must be worn at all times. A mask or face covering is not required if you are working alone in a confined office space (not including partitioned work areas in a larger office environment such as cubicles.)

If your office does not provide room for you and a guest to meet with six feet of space between you, you should not invite guests into your office. More information will be forthcoming from the Provost for faculty members prior to the start of the Fall 2020 semester, but please note that to the extent possible, faculty members are advised to hold virtual office hours instead of in-person office hours, at least for the Fall semester. This will assist in physical distancing measures and limiting exposure.

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Masks/face coverings should be worn by all staff working in a reception/receiving area. They should also be worn when inside any RMU facility where others are present, including in hallways, in break rooms, conference rooms, and other meeting locations.

Assuming physical distancing guidelines remain at six feet, occupancy limits (with signage clearly posted indicating such limits) will be placed at elevators, conference rooms, and other meeting spaces on campus to promote proper distancing. In addition, desks/work spaces will be modified as needed in offices utilizing communal work space to ensure proper distancing. Staff and faculty with their own offices will be encouraged to close their office doors whenever possible. Employees who need to do their work on campus at least part of the time will be permitted to do so, but departments will be encouraged to consider and adopt rotational work schedules, in which only a portion of the department's employees are present on campus at a given time, to enhance physical distance between employees. In addition, remote work should continue to be a viable work modality where appropriate.

Departments should assess open work environments and meeting rooms to institute measures to physically separate and increase distance between employees, their coworkers, and others, such as:

- Place visual cues such as floor decals, colored tape, or signage to indicate where people should stand while waiting in line or awaiting assistance.
- Place one-way directional signage for large open work spaces with multiple throughways to increase distance between employees moving through the space.
- Consider designating specific stairways for up or down traffic if building space permits.

### **Using Restrooms**

Use of restrooms should be limited based on size to ensure at least six feet distance between individuals. Wash your hands thoroughly after using the restroom.

### **Using Elevators**

Use of elevators should be limited where possible to avoid close proximity with others in a confined space. Those using elevators are required to wear a disposable face mask or cloth face mask/covering regardless of whether they are traveling alone or with others. You should also avoid touching the elevator buttons with your exposed hands/fingers if possible. Wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers upon departing the elevator.

### **Meetings**

When possible, meetings should be held using the extensive range of collaboration tools (i.e. Google Hangout, conference call, etc.), even when all parties are on campus. This will serve as a

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helpful physical distancing tool. Moreover, convening in groups increases the risk of viral transmission, and should be avoided unless necessary.

In-person meetings are limited to the restrictions of local, state, and federal orders, and should not exceed the current Governor's Order regarding building/room capacity (50%, 75%, etc.) assuming those in the room can safely maintain six feet of physical distance from one another. Departments should remove or rearrange chairs and tables or add visual cue marks in meeting spaces to support physical distancing practices among attendees. All attendees must wear a mask or face covering while sharing space in a common room.

Handshakes, fist bumps, and high fives are to be avoided. Any meetings which must occur in person should be held in an appropriately large space, where appropriate physical distancing can be maintained. Meetings involving food and beverage services are prohibited for the time being, unless express permission is provided by departmental management, such as a department head or equivalent, in which case food and beverages will be limited to single serving beverages and packaged food items in lieu of communal/shared platters and utensils.

### **Transportation & Shuttle Service**

Campus shuttle service will comply with physical distancing and enhanced cleaning requirements. Depending on the housing layout and student population, shuttle routes and capacities can be adjusted for physical distancing as needed. Riders and drivers will wear face masks as required.

### **Travel**

Non-essential travel should be avoided, especially to areas of heightened COVID-19 activity (hot spots). Individuals are encouraged to visit the CDC's webpage for the latest [guidance on travel](#).

### **Meals**

Dining and food service will remain fully focused on safety and sanitation. The university programs will meet regulatory guidelines, and site-specific adjustments will be made to enhance the safety of all guests. Consistent communications with guests and team members will be provided through supporting marketing documents and include appropriate signage strategically placed throughout dining venues.

Before and after eating, you should wash your hands thoroughly to reduce the potential transmission of the virus. If dining on campus, you should wear your mask or face covering until you are ready to eat, and then replace it immediately when you have finished. Eating with others should not be done unless appropriate physical distancing can be maintained. You are encouraged to take your food back to your office or sit outside and eat wherever possible.

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# **Mental and Emotional Well Being**

### **Employee Assistance Program**

RMU's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to offer emotional support during this stressful period. Telephonic counseling is available, and you can access this service using most smartphones, tablets, and computers. You may contact the EAP by calling 1-844-833-0527 or going to <http://www.lifesolutionsforyou.com/> (our company code is RMU).

### **Working Through COVID-19 Webpage**

Human Resources has compiled a number of resources and links to provide you with additional support. Please bookmark [this page](#) and check back often for updates.