

COVID-19 and Higher Education Facilities: Information for Administrators and Employees

On March 13, 2020, Governor Inslee issued a [Proclamation on College Closures](#) that bans all public and private universities, colleges, technical schools, apprenticeship programs, and similar schools and programs from having in-person classes in all counties of Washington State. This is in effect from March 17, 2020 until April 24, 2020. This ban may be extended.

This ban does not apply to:

- Operating school and program labs and clinics as long as social distancing measures are carried out and clinical procedures follow public health guidelines.
- Operating dormitory services, general administrative services, safety programs, research or medical facilities.

On March 16, 2020, Governor Inslee issued a [Proclamation on Statewide limits on Food and Beverage Services and Areas of Congregation](#). This bans people from gathering together in any public place. It also bans people from consuming onsite food and beverages in a public place. Selling prepared food and beverages that are not consumed onsite is still allowed.

Planning for an increase of COVID-19 in the community and to ease the impact on students and staff, use the [CDC's Pandemic Preparedness Checklist for Colleges and Universities](#). It is also important that you rely on local and state information regarding the current status of the virus in Washington State.

The below guidance will help you respond to COVID-19 at your facilities in the areas that remain open such as labs, clinics, dorms, and food services.

What should I do if I suspect a staff member or student is at risk for COVID-19?

If a staff member or student has symptoms of COVID-19, it is important to place them in a private room away from others and ask them to wear a face mask. If the student is seen in Student Health Services, make sure they call the clinic before going in. Make sure the Student Health Center knows to call your [local health department](#) (LHJ) right away if they think the student has COVID-19. Your LHJ will tell you what to do.

Review employee health policies and procedures?

Your employee health policies should ban staff from working in your facilities while sick.

- Review your sick leave policies and expand your paid leave options for your workers, if you can. Paid sick leave will help ease the financial impact of missed work for your staff, while also keeping the rest of your staff and students well.
- Talk with your workers about employee health requirements and your expectations. Now is a good time to retrain your staff to make sure everyone is on the same page.
- Workers that may be sick with signs of COVID-19 should stay home. Staff with family members or caregivers with signs of COVID-19 should also stay home.
- Workers and managers who have a fever, cough, trouble breathing, or other signs of illness should not go back to work until they have no signs. Stay home until at least 72 hours after signs of illness are gone.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) tells employers not to require workers to provide a doctor's note to stay home sick or to return to work. This puts a big burden on the healthcare system.
- Learn more by looking at [DOH's Resources for Workplaces and Employers](#).
- Maintain policies that allow staff to stay home to care for a sick family member. Employers should be aware that more workers may need to stay at home to care for sick children or other sick family members than is normal.

Everyone should practice good health habits:

- Place posters around your buildings that support [staying home when sick](#), [how to cough and sneeze](#), and [keeping hands clean](#). Put them up in places where people will see them.
- Make sure you have tissues and trash cans throughout any building that remains open to staff and students.
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not around, clean hands with a hand gel that has at least 60% alcohol in it. Make sure these supplies are always in buildings that remain open.
- Provide gloves when staff clean and check rooms and any areas people have access to.
- Do not touch their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Visit [coughing and sneezing](#) and [handwashing](#) webpages for more information.

Clean all high touch areas: (for more information, go to [CDC website for businesses](#))

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- Clean all high touch areas like stair handrails, elevator buttons, and door handles. Use cleaning products that are usually used in these areas. Follow the directions on the label.
- No extra cleaning beyond routine cleaning is needed at this time.
- Provide cleaning wipes so that high touch objects (for example, doorknobs, remote controls, keycards) can be wiped down before each use.

Increase hand hygiene:

- Everyone should wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Make sure each handwashing station always has soap, paper towels, and warm, running water.
- Even with proper handwashing, food workers must use a barrier such as tongs, gloves, or other utensil to prevent touching food. The virus will likely be killed with proper cooking temperatures. Use gloves or other utensils to prevent touching food that will not be fully cooked.
- Everyone should cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. If a tissue is not available, sneeze into your shirt sleeve, but NOT into your hands. Throw away used tissues into a trash can. Wash hands right away with soap and water after each cough or sneeze.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, and mouth. This will help to slow the spread of germs. The food safety rule calls for workers to wash their hands whenever they touch their eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Help staff and students keep their germs to themselves. Make sure you have tissues, trash cans, and hand gel that has at least 60% alcohol in it. Keep these supplies in all areas where people are.

Clean and kill germs:

The coronavirus that causes COVID-19 is killed by Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered cleaning products. Use these approved cleaning products.

- Only use cleaning products registered with EPA. Read the label and follow the directions on how to use it. Be sure to measure the right amount of cleaning product with test strips to make sure the active ingredient is in there.
- Here is the EPA [list of registered cleaning products](#) labeled for use against the new coronavirus. **Note:** There may be more cleaning products that meet EPA standards that are not on this list. The EPA updates the list often.
- When cleaning for coronavirus, follow the cleaning product label and use directions for viruses. The label will have an emerging viral pathogen claim. If the directions for use against viruses lists different times the area should remain wet or mixing amounts, use the longest time or strongest mixture. **Note:** These cleaning mixtures may go above the allowable levels for use on objects that food touches like dishes and utensils. Follow the

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label directions for FOOD CONTACT SURFACES when using the cleaning product near or on utensils and other areas food may touch.

- If you have questions about your cleaning product, read the label or reach out to your supplier for more information.
- Wash and rinse objects that have dirt or remains on them before cleaning. Cleaning products work better on clean surfaces.
- All areas that food may touch like utensils, cutting boards, and serving ware must be washed, rinsed, and cleaned often throughout the day. Dishes must be washed and cleaned with a cleaning product or a high-heat dishwasher after each use.
- All areas that do not touch food like equipment, counters, menus, tables, chairs, bathrooms, and doors should be cleaned often and any spills wiped up. Wash, rinse, and clean these things that people touch throughout the day.
- Protect your staff and students by cleaning common areas where people are coming in and out often. Use a separate cleaning cloth and cleaning mixture when cleaning the common areas.
- Remove objects, papers, and other materials from counters so you can clean these areas well.
- Clean the outside of condiment holders and other objects that people touch often like doorknobs, backs of chairs, faucet handles, tabletops, and menus at least daily.
- At this time, there are no state limits on self-service such as drink machines, bulk food containers, or salad bars. Wash, rinse, and clean tongs and other utensils in self-service areas often to help guests lower their risk for germs. Provide hand gel that has at least 60% alcohol in it at the entrance to the facility.

More COVID-19 Information and Resources

Stay up-to-date on the [current COVID-19 situation in Washington](#), [Governor Inslee's proclamations](#), [symptoms](#), [how it spreads](#), and [how and when people should get tested](#). See our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.

The risk of COVID-19 is not connected to race, ethnicity or nationality. [Stigma will not help to fight the illness](#). Share accurate information with others to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading.

- [WA State Department of Health 2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [WA State Coronavirus Response \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Find Your Local Health Department or District](#)
- [CDC Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Stigma Reduction Resources](#)

Have more questions about COVID-19? Call our hotline: **1-800-525-0127**. For interpretative services, **press #** when they answer and **say your language**. (Open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.) For

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questions about your own health, COVID-19 testing, or testing results, please contact your health care provider.

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