



University of Pittsburgh COVID-19 Standards and Guidelines: Shared Spaces

I. Purpose

This document details the University of Pittsburgh's (University) Standards and Guidelines on COVID-19 shared spaces, and addresses physical distancing, gatherings, enhanced cleaning, and interior ventilation adjustments. These Standards and Guidelines are applied to each of the University's COVID-19 Operational Postures (High Risk, Elevated Risk, and Guarded Risk). More information on these Operational Postures and their Gating Criteria can be accessed at the following website: www.coronavirus.pitt.edu/operational-postures.

The Standards and Guidelines outlined below are subject to change as deemed necessary by the Health Care Advisory Group's (HCAG) recommendation to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and approval of the Chancellor. Communication about the University's current Standards and Guidelines will be announced and posted on the following website: <https://www.coronavirus.pitt.edu/>.

The University will always operate in compliance with federal, state, and local health standards and restrictions, including [Pennsylvania Department of Health guidance](#). The University reserves the right to implement additional health standards and restrictions that reflect the needs of the University and the health, safety, and well-being of its community.

As conditions and circumstances change, this set of standards and guidelines may need to be revised.

II. Scope

The Standards and Guidelines below apply to the entire University, including all University members, campuses, and properties owned by the University or other properties when occupied by the University (e.g., leases).

III. Definition

- A. Gathering: A group of individuals in a Shared Space at a given time for a shared purpose.
- B. Shared Space: Any area or location, indoors or outdoors, that is commonly used and populated by multiple individuals at the same time.

- C. University member: Refers to all full- and part-time faculty, staff, students, visitors, volunteers, fellows, trainees, and interns on all campuses.

IV. Physical Distancing

Physical distancing, also commonly referred to as “social distancing,” is the amount of physical space between two or more individuals. Physical distancing is a pertinent measure to prevent asymptomatic and symptomatic individuals from spreading viruses, such as COVID-19. Physical distancing, coupled with appropriate face coverings (see Standards and Guidelines on Face Coverings), reduces the potential transmission of COVID-19 during common social interactions and human functions such as talking, breathing, coughing, sneezing, and laughing.

The conditions outlined below are the University’s requirements regarding physical distancing for all of the University’s Operational Postures. These Standards and Guidelines presume continued adherence to all Standards and Guidelines on face coverings, personal protective equipment (PPE), and personal hygiene.

- As respiratory droplets typically do not travel more than six (6) feet, University members must maintain a physical distance of at least six (6) feet from other individuals whether or not they are exhibiting [symptoms of COVID-19, where practicable](#). This physical distance should be maintained regardless of being indoors or outdoors. An individual can be infected with COVID-19 without apparent symptoms. The only exemption to this requirement applies to physical distancing between individuals within a residential cohort (e.g., “pod”, roommates in a residence hall or apartment) or within a research lab, where such physical distancing may not be possible and additional PPE may be required. Wearing a face covering or other protective equipment does not exempt individuals from this physical distancing requirement.
- Whenever possible, and even when six (6) feet of physical distance is observed, University members must make all efforts to limit the amount of time spent in a space with other individuals, especially in smaller spaces (e.g., elevators or bathrooms). If it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least six (6) feet during certain activities, limit the time spent closer than six (6) feet to another individual to 15 minutes or less.
- The work environment for University members on campus must be consistent with the need to maintain at least six (6) feet of physical distance, including between workstations (e.g., desks) in classrooms and office space, where practicable. Plexiglass or other barriers in workspaces where people must face each other or are unable to be six (6) feet apart (e.g., student service counters and cash registers) must be installed, where practicable.

- For physical distancing in residence halls and research facilities, please refer to specific, detailed supplemental guidance provided by the administrative units who oversee those settings.
- Participation in athletics may require exceptions to these physical distancing guidelines. Please refer to supplemental guidance from the Athletics Department, developed in concert with NCAA standards and guidelines, for specific protocols to safely manage those exceptions.

V. Shared Spaces and Gatherings

The maximum number of individuals in a Shared Space must be limited to the extent necessary to maintain the minimum physical distance of six (6) feet between individuals (see Section IV), where practicable. The maximum size of a specific Gathering for each Operational Posture must be limited in accordance with the limits outlined in Appendix A and in adherence with federal, state, and local health standards and restrictions on [public Gatherings](#).

Below are more specific conditions to be followed when applying these requirements. These Standards and Guidelines presume continued adherence to all standards and guidelines on face coverings, personal protective equipment (PPE), and personal hygiene.

- Traffic, or the flow and movement of individuals, must be minimized throughout enclosed indoor spaces, including elevators and stairwells. If possible and safe to do so, stairwells should be designated as one-way (e.g., up or down). Whenever possible, stairs should be used in place of an elevator.
- Unless otherwise posted, a maximum of four (4) individuals are allowed inside an elevator at one time to ensure a physical distance of six (6) feet between each individual to the extent possible. Additional limitations for elevator capacity may need to be taken to accommodate wheelchairs, mail deliveries, custodial carts, etc. to ensure proper physical distancing, to the extent possible.
- The permitted density in Shared Spaces and Gatherings may be achieved through staggering the use of an area by restricting the number of individuals allowed in that area at one time to ensure safe physical distancing of six (6) feet. For larger or more high-traffic spaces, staff support may be required to ensure adherence to this guidance. Additional parameters applicable to the instructional settings are available in the [Instruction Standards and Guidelines](#).

- Chairs and desks must be marked as not for use, or removed from classrooms, conference and waiting rooms, and other Shared Spaces, to the extent needed to ensure proper physical distancing of six (6) feet between individuals. Additionally, allowable occupancy levels must be identified and posted for those spaces, in adherence to these guidelines, in order to control workflow and/or establish maximum attendance.
- Signage must be placed at entrances of buildings, classrooms, etc. to help inform appropriate physical distancing of six (6) feet.
- Events, Gatherings, and meetings should be held remotely to the extent possible in accordance with the [Meetings, Conferences, Events, and Guests Standards and Guidelines](#).
- Research spaces must be operated in compliance with these conditions, to the extent possible. For specific guidelines for research settings and scenarios, please refer to the research-specific guidance at [Pitt Research COVID-19 Updates and Resources](#).
- Occupants of a space, including rooms in University Housing, must adhere to all building and room occupancy limits applicable to the area, as described in the [Building Occupancy Standards and Guidelines](#).

VI. Enhanced Cleaning

As a community effort to mitigate and stop the spread of COVID-19, University members should continue to practice good personal hygiene as well as enhanced cleaning of University facilities, including housing, classrooms, and offices by University facilities management and custodial staff.

The conditions outlined below are the University's requirements for enhanced cleaning measures. These Standards and Guidelines presume continued adherence to all Standards and Guidelines on face coverings, personal protective equipment (PPE), and personal hygiene.

- High-touch surfaces (e.g., desks, doorknobs, keyboards, elevator buttons, railings) and common areas must be disinfected and sanitized multiple times per day.
- Cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting products designated by the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) for use against SARS-CoV-2](#) must be used.
- University members are responsible for cleaning/disinfecting high-touch surfaces in their assigned work areas and Shared Spaces, such as break rooms and lunch areas, before and after use. Additionally, University members should wipe down their own desk, chair, and/or podium for instruction as they enter the classroom. Appropriate cleaning materials will be provided within the classroom to do so.

- For additional cleaning and disinfection requirements in a laboratory setting, please refer to [Pitt Research COVID-19 Updates and Resources](#).
- Additional details on cleaning and disinfection products and protocols can be found on the [University's Department of Environmental Health and Safety COVID-19 Resources](#) webpage.

VII. Interior Ventilation

Proper airflow through enclosed spaces, such as classrooms and offices, adds an additional layer of mitigation to help stop the spread of COVID-19 among individuals in a Shared Space.

The conditions outlined below are the University's requirements for enhanced interior ventilation measures. These Standards and Guidelines presume continued adherence to all Standards and Guidelines on face coverings, personal protective equipment (PPE), and personal hygiene.

- All shared rooms must have good air flow, where practicable. All ventilation and exhaust systems will be thoroughly cleaned and tested to ensure operation as designed and must be operating properly; circulation of outdoor air should be increased as much as possible.
- The potential to modify existing ventilation systems to increase ventilation rates or the percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system should be considered, where feasible.

VIII. Related Authorities

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Guidance: Symptoms of Coronavirus](#)
[Pennsylvania Department of Health COVID-19 guidance](#)
[Pitt Research COVID-19 Updates and Resources](#)
[Process to Reopen Pennsylvania](#)
[University's COVID-19 Operational Postures and Gating Criteria](#)
[University's COVID-19 Standards and Guidelines: Face Coverings, PPE, and Personal Hygiene](#)
[University's Department of Environmental Health and Safety Guidance and Use Case Scenarios for Face Coverings and PPE](#)
[U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) disinfectants for use against SARS-CoV-2](#)

IX. Contact Information and Public Accessibility

This document is posted on the Office of Policy Development and Management's website and can be found at: <https://www.policy.pitt.edu/university-policies-and-procedures/covid-19-standards-and-guidelines>. For questions related to this document, please contact: Resilience Steering Committee at ResilienceSteeringCommittee@pitt.edu.

Appendix A – Density Restrictions Across Operational Postures

All loosening of restrictions between Operational Postures presumes continued adherence to all Standards and Guidelines on face coverings, personal hygiene, PPE, and physical distancing. These density restrictions should be applied to specific circumstances in conjunction with all other relevant [University Standards and Guidelines](#).

Standard	High Risk Posture	Elevated Risk Posture	Guarded Risk Posture
Gatherings	<p>Indoor Gatherings are limited to no more than 10 people.</p> <p>Outdoor Gatherings are limited to no more than 25 people.</p>	Maximum number limited to the extent necessary to maintain a minimum physical distance of 6 feet between individuals, unless they are members of a “pod” or household and up to the allowable occupancy rate permitted by federal, state, or local gatherings standards.	Maximum number limited to the extent necessary to maintain a minimum physical distance of 6 feet between individuals, unless they are members of a “pod” or household and up to the allowable occupancy rate permitted by federal, state, or local gatherings standards.
Instructional settings	In-person instruction should not be permitted, except for certain clinical programs in which clinical training and field experience are allowed for individuals preparing for licensure and certification.	In-person instruction that adheres to proper physical distancing (6 feet) is permitted. If a classroom cannot accommodate distancing, additional steps must be taken in order to comply, such as: moving to a larger space, staggering attendance, or conducting the course virtually.	In-person instruction that adheres to proper physical distancing (6 feet) is permitted. If a classroom cannot accommodate distancing, additional steps must be taken in order to comply, such as: moving to a larger space, staggering attendance, or conducting the course virtually.
Office settings	In-person office work should be limited to the greatest extent possible.	Limited in-person office work that adheres to proper physical distancing is permitted.	In-person office work that adheres to proper physical distancing is permitted.
Other Shared Spaces	Use of any other Shared Spaces that adheres to proper physical distancing (6 feet) is permitted.	Use of any other Shared Spaces that adheres to proper physical distancing (6 feet) is permitted.	Use of any other Shared Spaces that adheres to proper physical distancing (6 feet) is permitted.