



Return to the Workplace Guidebook

Effective May 18, 2020

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Guiding Principles

West Texas A&M University (WTAMU) is committed to responding to the COVID-19 pandemic with safety and the well-being of all students, employees, and visitors as a top priority. The primary goal of WTAMU's response is to protect the health of our students and employees while continuing the University mission of higher education and research from the Panhandle to the World.

WTAMU's plans are also consistent with guidance provided by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the State of Texas, and The Texas A&M University System (TAMUS), Randall and Potter counties, the cities of Amarillo and Canyon and the Bi-County Health Department. The COVID-19 virus continues to evolve and the WTAMU plans will continue to be updated as more information becomes available.

WTAMU plans to return to normal operations will include a phased approach (see page 3). The timeline is subject to change. Also it is important to understand that the process of re-opening may be longer or shorter than expected and will be based on Health Department guidance.

Return to the Workplace

WT Workplace Expectations and Guidelines

All employees are expected to fully comply with the TAMUS policies and WTAMU rules and guidelines outlined in this document. All returning employees must complete the TrainTraq Training # 2114131: Safe Practices for Returning to the Office during the COVID-19 Pandemic and the TrainTraq Certification #2114130: Certification for System Employees.

WT Symptom Monitoring Requirement

Employees must self-monitor for symptoms daily before coming to campus. Employees instructed to return to the workplace must be free of ANY symptoms potentially related to COVID-19 before reporting to campus.

These symptoms include:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
- Known close contact with a person who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19

Employees, after completing the required training and the certification, are confirming on a daily basis they are symptom-free by their presence on campus.

Employees experiencing symptoms should contact their health care provider, enter sick leave in Workday, and inform their supervisor. As a reminder, those employees on Blue Cross Blue Shield insurance can visit MDLive rather than visiting a medical facility. According to TAMUS and Chancellor Sharp, there should be no insurance related co-pays for COVID-19 medical visits or tests.

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

- Older adults (aged 65 years and older)
- Chronic lung disease
- Moderate to severe asthma
- Serious heart conditions
- Being immunocompromised
- Severe obesity (BMI of 40 or higher)
- Diabetes
- Chronic kidney disease being treated with dialysis
- Liver disease

WT Phased Return to Campus

WTAMU will phase-in a return of employees over time and each new phase will be scheduled only after University leadership determines that the pandemic risk has been reduced. The phased approach allows the campus to continue operations, with a reduced number of people on campus, to ensure WT follows State of Texas mandates and CDC guidance before progressing to the next phase. Please note that the dates for each phase are estimated and subject to change.

- Phase 1 (May 18): Approximately 25 percent of employees should return to work on campus.
- Phase 2 (estimated June 1): Approximately 50 percent of employees should return to work on campus.
- Phase 3 (estimated July 1): All remaining employees, which have not been exempted from work, should return to work on campus.

During the initial phase, consideration should be given to those who are at high risk as defined above, caring for children or family members, or are able to continue working remotely. Supervisors should discuss with their employees to identify and notify Human Resources (HR) those with an approved [Request for Return to Work Exemption](#) and approval to continue working from home.

WT Return to Work Operations

Employees instructed to return to work on campus should work within their building and department to ensure compliance with required social distancing measures and to reduce crowds within workspaces.

- **Remote Work:** During the initial phase, those who are approved to work remotely to fulfill their work responsibilities may continue if the arrangements have been approved by the employee's immediate supervisor and appropriate Vice President.
- **Alternating Days:** To limit the number of individuals and interactions among those on campus, during the first two phases, departments should consider scheduling employees on alternating days. These alternating schedules will help ensure social distancing, especially in areas with large common workspaces.
- **Staggered Entering/Departing:** The beginning and end of the workday typically brings more people together at common entry/exit points of buildings. Staggering entering and departure times will help reduce traffic in common areas to maintain social distancing requirements.
- **University Buildings:** All buildings on campus, except MMNH, all Residence Halls and the Dining Hall, will be open from 7:30am to 5:00pm Monday through Friday. If any changes to building operation schedules occur, the University will notify and communicate it to the campus community.

WT Returning of University Equipment

Upon returning to campus, or at the latest July 1st, equipment checked out to employees for remote work must be returned and sanitized before use. Please coordinate the return with your supervisor who granted permission to use University property at home.

Health and Safety Guidance

WT Personal Safety Practices

To prevent the transmission of the virus, the CDC recommends that employees wear an appropriate face covering or mask while in close proximity to others (within 6-feet) and in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (common work spaces, meeting rooms, classrooms, etc.). WTAMU requires employees to wear appropriate face coverings when outside of a one-person office or when meeting with or around more than two individuals.

Appropriate use of face coverings or masks is critical in minimizing risks to others around you. You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick. As supply chains allow, disposable masks and face coverings will be provided by WTAMU as needed. Disposable face masks/coverings may only be worn for one use and then should be placed appropriately in the trash. Departments with employees who need disposable face masks/coverings should contact WTAMU Central Supply (ext. 2155). Employees and students may also use their own personal masks/face coverings.

Cloth face coverings should only be worn for one day at a time and should be properly laundered before re-use.

WT Use and Care of Facemasks/Coverings

Putting on the facemasks/coverings:

- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer prior to handling the facemasks/coverings.

- Ensure the facemask or face covering fits over the nose and under the chin.
- Situate the facemask or face covering properly so that it is snug against the nose.
- Throughout the process, avoid touching the front of the facemask or face covering.

Taking off the facemask/covering:

- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth when removing the facemask or face covering.
- Wash hands immediately after removing.

WT Social Distancing

Keeping space between you and others is one of the best tools to avoid being exposed to the COVID-19 virus, slowing the spread, and helping protect people who are at higher risk. Since people can spread the virus before they know they are sick, it is important to stay away from others when possible, even if you have no symptoms. Employees who have returned to campus should follow these social distancing practices:

- Always stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people
- Do not gather in groups of more than 10
- Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings
- Wear facemask or face covering when not in personal offices

WT Taking Temperatures

Each employee should continue to self-monitor daily and should not report to work if they have fever or display any of the COVID-19 virus symptoms listed above on page 2.

WT Handwashing

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place, after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, or touching your face. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth, and wash your hands after touching your face.

Hand sanitizer stations are located across campus and will be refilled as needed. If you find a station that needs to be refilled, please contact the SSC Physical Plant (ext. 2133 and physicalplant@wtamu.edu) with the exact location.

WT Gloves

According to the CDC, gloves are not necessary for general use and do not replace good hand hygiene. Washing with soap or cleaning your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol is

considered best practice. If your job duties require gloves, please contact your supervisor. The University has gloves in stock for departments that request them.

WT Goggles and Face Shields

Employees do not need to wear goggles or face shields as a part of general activity on campus.

WT PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)

The University has provided small “Start Back to Work” kits that contain gloves, a mask and hand sanitizer. Gloves are not required but are provided. Employees may provide their own preferred PPE stock as well. These PPE items will be available for zero-priced ordering as needed. Be aware that quantities may be limited.

WT Cleaning/Disinfection

SSC teams have enhanced their disinfecting and cleaning practices across campus and are paying particular attention to high-traffic areas and high-touch fixtures such as doorknobs, light switches, and handrails. SSC monitors soap and hand sanitizer dispensers and is refilling them as required. If you find a station that needs to be refilled please contact SSC (ext. 2133 or physicalplant@wtamu.edu) with the exact location.

University Buildings: In addition to the routine custodial cleaning protocol, the University has instructed SSC to implement an enhanced cleaning frequency to clean and disinfect common areas and commonly touched surfaces in occupied buildings. Touchpoints such as entrance handles, handrails, elevator buttons, tables, and restroom stall handles/doors are being cleaned once daily and will be increased to twice daily five days a week, using EPA-registered disinfectants. Some areas of the campus, specific to the operation, will be cleaned to the standard of their department or unit’s operational needs. WTAMU Facilities will continue to monitor the situation and update cleaning protocols as necessary.

University Installed Sanitizer Dispenser Stations: Hand Sanitizer dispenser stations containing alcohol-based hand sanitizer are installed at all building entrances and will be maintained as supplies allow. In addition SSC will be installing sanitizer wipe stations in all university buildings for patrons to use to wipe down surfaces as needed. Although hand sanitizer can help prevent the spread of the virus, practicing the CDC’s proper hand-washing technique is considered more effective. Handwashing should include the use of regular soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds. If soap is not immediately available, use hand sanitizer with 60% alcohol content or greater.

Disinfecting My Workplace or Study Area: Clean commonly touched surfaces several times per day this includes lab benches, lab equipment, desks, phones, remote controls, printers, fax machines, computer mice and keyboards. The University is providing departments with EPA-registered disinfectants such as single-use disinfectant wipes and multi-surface spray cleaners VIREX II 256. Always use cleaning products as recommended on manufacturer labels, including wearing disposable gloves where directed. It is recommended that your workspace or study area be personally cleaned before and after personal use. Here are some simple instructions for the use of the VIREX II256 spray bottles:

VIREX II 256

Use Instructions for the One-Step Disinfectant Cleaner and Deodorant in a Spray Bottle:

- Pre-Clean heavily soiled areas
- Apply a light mist to hard, non-porous environment surfaces. To disinfect, all surfaces must remain wet for approximately 10 minutes.
- Air Dry, wipe surfaces to dry and remove residue, or rinse with potable water, do not use on glassware utensils or dishes.

Office: Highly touched surfaces: chairs, desktops, keyboards, monitors, remotes, light switches, elevator buttons, handrails, doors, knobs, door push plates, card readers, refrigerator/freezer doors and handles will be cleaned during daily servicing.

Labs: Equipment panels/switches, bench tops, biosafety cabinet and fume hood sashes and their working surfaces; bio-waste container lids, commonly used hand tools and small objects, PPE (including goggles), refrigerator/freezer doors and handles will be cleaned during daily servicing.

Classrooms: Highly touched surfaces: chairs, desktops, tabletops, keyboards, monitors, remotes, light switches, window shade handles, handrails, doors, knobs, door push plates, card readers, and cabinet handles will be cleaned during daily servicing.

The Difference between Cleaning and Disinfecting:

Cleaning refers to the removal of germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces. Cleaning does not kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.

Disinfecting refers to using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, however, disinfecting a surface after cleaning can further lower the risk of spreading infection.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Area Exposed to COVID-19:

The University has instructed SSC to be ready to send special cleaning crews as needed to disinfect and sanitize areas that have been reported to have been exposed.

WT Coughing/Sneezing Hygiene

Remember, always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and cover up with the inside of your elbow. Always throw used tissues in the trash. Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

WT Campus Visitors

Campus visitors are expected to follow the same guidance as employees. Visits to campus should be postponed when possible to reduce traffic in common areas. Visitors should not visit campus if they exhibit any of the COVID-19 virus symptoms listed on page 2.

Guidance for Specific Workplace Scenarios

WT Shuttle Transportation

If taking the University shuttle transportation (resumes in the fall), wear a mask before entering the bus and avoid touching surfaces with your hands. Upon disembarking, wash your hands or use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

WT Working in Office Environments

If you work in an open environment, be sure to maintain at least 6 feet distance from co-workers. If possible, have at least one workspace separating you from another co-worker. You should always wear a facemask or face covering while in a shared workspace/room.

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

- Place visual cues such as floor decals, colored tape, or signs to indicate to customers where they should stand while waiting in line (The University will provide where needed. Contact Stan Pena (spena@wtamu.edu or ext. 2939) for further information).

If you work in an office, no more than one person should be in the same room unless the required 6 feet of distancing can be consistently maintained. If more than one person is in a room, masks/face coverings should always be worn. A mask or face covering is not required if you are working alone in a confined office space (note this does not include partitioned work areas in a large, open environment).

Any employee in a reception/receiving area should wear a facemasks or face coverings. Facemasks or face coverings should also be used when inside any facility where others are present, including walking in narrow hallways where others travel and in break rooms, conference rooms, and other meeting locations.

WT Common Spaces

In hallways, workrooms, and breakrooms it is always important to maintain 6 feet of distance between you and others. If more than one person is in these common spaces, a facemask or face covering should be worn if social distancing cannot be maintained. Individuals should not sit facing one another. Departments should remove or rearrange chairs and tables or add visual cue marks in employee breakrooms to support social distancing practices between employees. Wipe all surfaces, including tables, refrigerator handles, coffee machines, copiers, etc. after use.

WT Restrooms

In restrooms with stalls, employees are encouraged to occupy every other stall, if possible. After using the restroom, wash your hands thoroughly or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol to reduce the potential transmission of the virus.

WT Elevators

No more than three people should be in the elevator at a time. Those who are able should use the stairs whenever possible. While using an elevator, you should wear a facemask or face covering and avoid touching

the elevator buttons with your exposed hand/fingers, if possible. Wash your hands thoroughly afterward or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol to reduce the potential transmission of the virus.

WT Meetings

Convening in groups increases the risk of transmitting the virus. Where feasible, meetings should be held in whole or part using the extensive range of available collaboration tools (WebEx, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, telephone, etc.).

In-person meetings are limited 10 individuals and all attendees should maintain 6 feet of separation. Departments should remove or rearrange chairs and tables or add visual cue marks in meeting rooms to support social distancing practices between attendees. All attendees should wear a facemask or face covering while sharing space in a common room.

While on campus, you are encouraged to communicate with your colleagues and supervisors as needed by email, telephone, WebEx, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Jabber, or other available technology rather than meeting face-to-face.

WT Dining

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 a facemask or face covering until you are ready to eat and then replace it after eating. On-campus dining will have markings to ensure there is at least 6 feet of distance between each customer. Seating has also been removed to ensure social distancing. Employees are encouraged to take food and enjoy the campus landscape as able.

WT Laboratories

Researchers performing non-hazardous and/or dry work should, whenever possible, perform such work in their individual workspace. Researchers conducting work with hazardous or bio-hazardous material or conducting work on animals should follow social distancing guidelines.

WT Plexiglass

Where necessary, if your area desires to have plexiglass installed please contact Stan Pena (spena@wtamu.edu or ext. 2939). Plexiglass has been installed in areas where service to customers occurs within 6 feet (Bursar's Office, Mail Services, Dining areas, etc.).

WT Signage and Posters

Building occupants are expected to follow signage about social distancing throughout University buildings, doors, restrooms, etc. Only university approved signs and posters can be placed around campus. If a department has identified a need for signage that is not already established please contact the office of Stan Pena (spena@wtamu.edu or Ext. 2939) with your request. Currently the University will provide door, floor, restroom and wipe and hand sanitizing units.

As Always, Be Safe and Be Courteous to Others

WT CARES



- **PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING**

- **WEAR PROTECTIVE FACE COVERING**

- **WASH HANDS AND CLEAN SURFACES**