

Dear Colleagues:

Leaders across URMC, including those of us focused on research and education, are working to create an environment that is demonstrably safe for everyone who comes to the Medical Center. Please review the following guidelines for learning, teaching and conducting research in the COVID era.

**Masks** have to be worn properly (snugly covering mouth and nose) at all times when on Campus, with these exceptions:

- When you are alone in a room with a closed door. A mask must be readily available, however. As soon as somebody enters a room that was previously occupied by one unmasked person, both have to mask.
- In an area designated for eating, while sitting down, only during the time that you are eating. (When not eating, you need to mask).
- When outside of a building and more than 6 feet away from others.
- Removing a mask briefly for taking a drink while nobody is within 6 feet is allowed. No 30 min unmasked coffee breaks!

### **Physical distancing**

A physical distance of 6 feet between individuals should be maintained even when wearing PPE. Practically, this means two people cannot occupy a shared space of less than 40 square feet for more than brief instances. Work places at lab benches, desks or scientific instruments where people spend extended periods of time cannot be occupied when they are less than 6 feet apart. Brief, masked encounters in hallways or passing by lab benches are permissible.

A specific example: A large lab bay such as in MRBX can be occupied by two people working masked at opposite ends, 6 or more feet apart. They can however not both sit back to back at their desks at the same time.

If experiments require that two or more people work together for significant lengths of time (more than 15 minutes), masking and disinfection routines have to be followed diligently. In addition, eye protection (safety goggles or face shield) must be worn.

### **Eating and breaks**

Eating is only permitted in designated areas that allow physical distancing, 6 feet of separation between seats, and have disinfection materials. While eating in a designated area, a physical distance of at least 6 feet has to be strictly maintained. Placement of seating should be marked to indicate proper locations and chairs should not be moved closer together. Physical distancing rules also apply when eating on outdoor picnic tables. Masks can only be removed while sitting down and eating. You will need to mask up when you are finished, even if you choose to remain in the area. Eating areas should be disinfected before and after use.

Some departments have set up small seminar rooms as lunch rooms. The use of such rooms for eating and for meetings has to be strictly separated, i.e. no eating during meetings or classes.

## **Group gatherings**

As a rule, meetings among two or more people should happen by Zoom. The following rules and exceptions apply:

- Teaching events that require physical demonstrations can be done in person, provided masking of both presenters and participants is maintained, and physical distancing rules are followed.
- Teachers of academic classes, such as small courses for MS or PhD students can petition to their chairs for authorization to hold in person classes with the same restrictions mentioned above: masking of both presenters and participants and physical distancing.
- Physical participation in classes has to be voluntary. Electronic access has to be provided.
- Standing group meetings cannot be held in person and have to continue electronically until further notice.

## **Other guidance**

While using stairs is encouraged, elevators can be used but with limited occupancy. Posted signs indicate the maximum number of riders allowed in an elevator (usually 2 or 4).

Thank you for your cooperation.

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\*If you have any concerns about safety compliance or other issues related to returning to work, please email [research\\_covid\\_concerns@urmc.rochester.edu](mailto:research_covid_concerns@urmc.rochester.edu).