

COVID-19

Returning to the Workplace

Human Resources Guidance for Supervisors



University of Missouri System

COLUMBIA | KANSAS CITY | ROLLA | ST. LOUIS

Contents

Preface.....	1
Introduction	2
Supervisor Expectations	3
Guidance for Working in Office Environments	4
Restrooms, Elevators, Stairways, Entry & Exit Points	5
Health and Safety Expectations.....	5
Enhanced Policies (HR-700).....	7
HR-700 Q&As.....	7
Appendix A: Other Resources	10

Preface

This guide presents a summary of information drawn from University policies and procedures and the HR-700 Enhanced HR Policies for Employees in Response to COVID-19 and is designed as a resource for supervisors, managers and other leaders. The University reserves the right to add, amend or rescind any aspect of this guide at any time and for any reason. This guide is a reference resource only. Applicable Human Resources (HR) policies, Collected Rules and Regulations (CRR), and benefit Summary Plan Documents are the source documents of authority and control. If there is a conflict between the language in this guide and the language in any of the source documents, the language in the source documents apply. This guide does not create any contractual rights or alter at-will employment status.

Introduction

Once an employee repopulation plan has been approved by the appropriate leadership and communicated within a unit, supervisors can use this as guidance when employees begin to physically return to the workplace.

Supervisors play a crucial role in our continued commitment to find creative workplace solutions, remain flexible, and fulfill the university's mission while safeguarding the health and well-being of employees. During these times, supervisors' leadership will be vital. Please refer to policies, such as HR-700, for specific information.

Supervisor Expectations

All managers and supervisors should consider the guidance below when returning the workforce to on-site work. In addition, managers and supervisors should remain flexible and ready to modify plans if and when federal, state or local authorities may provide further guidance in response to COVID-19. Managers and supervisors are responsible to monitor activity to ensure the safety and well-being of all employees, students, visitors and the general public in compliance with measures identified in HR-700 and unit return-to-work plans.

- Proceed thoughtfully, carefully, and deliberately when considering which employees to return to on-site work and at which phase they return
 - Identify on-site operations that need to resume to accomplish unit, university, and UM System goals, including returning to full on-site operations
 - Document the rationale for when and why employees are directed to return
- Continue the practice of telecommuting (i.e., remote work), when possible
 - Extending a telecommuting arrangement on a month-to-month basis may be a way to accommodate an employee whose work can be performed remotely
 - Ensure employees with similar job functions are treated consistently
- Be creative in scheduling employees on-site work (e.g., staggering office time, staggering reporting and departing times; alternating days worked in the office, etc.)
 - Consider coordinating arrival and departure times of staff to reduce congestion during typical “rush hours” of the business day
- Promote the continuation of Zoom, Microsoft Teams or other virtual meeting platforms
- Emphasize healthy workplace practices
 - Maintain six-foot social distancing as much as possible
 - Wear cloth face masks when social distancing is not possible, including in common areas
 - Frequent handwashing
 - Covering mouth and/or nose when coughing or sneezing
 - Cleaning and disinfecting workspaces daily
 - Staying home when sick
 - Other protocols established in the repopulation plan for your unit or campus
- Be compassionate and flexible
 - Listen to employees who are hesitant about returning to on-site work and identify the source of their concerns
 - Consider solutions that address employee concerns while still meeting unit goals
 - Work with Human Resources to determine whether employees may be entitled to leave or reasonable accommodations, such as employees who:
 - May be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19
 - Need to care for children whose school or daycare is closed because of COVID-19
 - Are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking medical treatment
 - Have been advised by a doctor to self-quarantine, or are caring for someone who is self-quarantining
- When approached with a workplace request from an employee who may be at a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19,

- If it seems immediately reasonable to say yes to an employee request, say yes
- Document and communicate the details with the employee. Also notify your HR Business Partner/Consultant of your action
- If you are considering rejecting an employee's request, reach out to your HR Business Partner/Consultant to further discuss before saying no
- Encourage the employee to contact Human Resources. Employees should provide medical information and documents to Human Resources, not their supervisor.
- Work with Human Resources to determine whether reasonable accommodations may be appropriate.
- Post signs in common areas to remind employees about maintaining social distancing and healthy workplace practices.
- Prepare the workplace for social distancing (for example, spacing chairs six feet apart). Consider closing areas where social distancing is not feasible.
- Be present in the workplace to monitor compliance, and ask employees to share needs and concerns.
- Communicate with your employees
 - Educate employees on the steps that are being taken to protect their safety and the safety of others
 - Remind employees of the resources that are available to them, should they be experiencing anxiety or other issues related to returning to work, COVID-19, etc. (e.g., [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#), [United Healthcare](#))

Guidance for Working in Office Environments

The work environment should be prepared to follow federal, state or local public health orders and guidelines. Ensure employees with similar job functions are treated similarly.

- If employees work in an open office environment, be sure they are able to maintain at least six feet distance from co-workers.
- Be creative with the workspace:
 - Consider leaving some workspaces empty to separate team members, or moving employees to less populated areas of the office,
 - Add barriers between cubicles to ensure appropriate safeguards and distancing between employees, or
 - Stagger employee's office hours who are working in cubicles to work on opposite days, etc., in order to reduce the number of employees where social distancing is not feasible.
- Place visual cues to maintain appropriate distancing such as floor decals, colored tape, or signs as guidance.
- Place one-way directional signage for large open work spaces to increase distance between employees moving through the space.
- Place signage to remind employees to wear cloth face coverings when it may not be feasible to maintain social distancing (or if otherwise required by federal, state or local public health orders)
- Remind employees to limit in-person meetings or large gatherings, continue to meet virtually when possible, and to maintain appropriate social distancing.

Restrooms, Elevators, Stairways, Entry & Exit Points

Collaborate with the facilities team, building coordinators, and others as appropriate to ensure protocols have been established and communicated with the workforce. Consider establishing protocol related to the following measures:

- Limit access to restrooms to ensure social distancing between individuals
- Limit access to elevators so that employees/visitors enter an elevator one at a time
- Identify specific stairways for up and down traffic if building space allows
- Place signage on doors to remind employees not hold the door for others in support of social distancing
- Account for visitors that come into your office throughout the day for contact tracing purposes as needed

Health and Safety Expectations

As supervisors, it is important to understand the health-related guidance related to COVID-19, both for yourself and for employees. Review information contained in HR-700, Section H. on precautionary measures for returning to work on-site and the associated Q&A's for additional details and guidance. Any employee health information should be treated as confidential and not shared.

Share this information often with members of your unit. All employees are expected to do the following:

- **Practice social distancing.** Employees should practice social distancing, maintaining a distance of six feet, as work duties permit.
- **Wear a cloth face covering around others.** Employees will be asked to wear a cloth face mask when social distancing is not possible, including interactions with co-workers. Face coverings should be cleaned or replaced regularly.
- **Wash hands often.** Employees should wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
 - especially after being in a public place,
 - after touching frequently used items or surfaces, or
 - after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, employees should use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol, covering all surfaces of their hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry.
- **Employees should avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth.**
- **Cover coughs and sneezes.** Employees should always cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when they cough or sneeze, or use the inside of their elbow.
- **Check temperature.** Employees should measure their own temperature before coming to the workplace and stay home if they have a fever. Normal temperature should not exceed 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit. Units may implement medical screenings for employees, including checking employees' body temperatures, with approval of the President, Chancellor, or designee, or when required by federal, state or local public health orders.

- **Clean and disinfect spaces.**
 - Employees should clean *and* disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily following [CDC recommendations](#) including spaces such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, faucets, and sinks.
 - Employees are encouraged to use disinfectant between uses of shared spaces throughout the day.
 - Keep workspaces free of clutter, excess personal items, and other unnecessary items to allow for maximum cleaning of all surfaces. Supervisors should address workspaces that are not properly maintained.
- **Know when employees should stay home from work.**
 - Employees should notify their supervisors if they have had close contact with a person with COVID-19, who are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, or who have been diagnosed with COVID-19.
 - Employees who are reasonably believed to have been exposed to COVID-19 or who have COVID-19 symptoms or diagnosis may be directed to remain away from the worksite.
 - Remind employees that expanded leave benefits are available for employees directed to remain away from the worksite for reasons related to COVID-19.
- **Be aware of and monitor for COVID-19 symptoms.** Supervisors may ask employees who report feeling ill at work, or who call in sick, questions about their symptoms to determine whether they have or may have COVID-19. Please refer to the CDC for a current list of symptoms, which may include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath, new loss of taste or smell, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea.
- **Support Coping and Resilience**
 - Encourage employees to take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media, if they are feeling overwhelmed or distressed
 - Promote employees eating healthy, exercising, getting sleep and finding time to unwind
 - Encourage employees to talk with people they trust about their concerns and how they are feeling
 - Consider posting signages for the national distress hotline: 1-800-985-5990, or text TalkWithUs to 66746

Enhanced Policies (HR-700)

HR-700 Q&As

1. **When the stay-at-home orders have been lifted, when can employees return to work on campus?**

Employees may return to on-site work when directed by their supervisor.

2. **What if an employee is unable to work?**

Employees who are directed to return to work on-site work who are unable to do so may be eligible for leave, alternative work arrangements, or enhanced precautionary measures in accordance with HR-700:

- Employees who are caring for an immediate family member whose school or place of care is closed for reasons related to COVID-19 may be eligible for FFCRA Paid Sick Leave, FFCRA Expanded FMLA Leave, or enhanced University leave in accordance with HR-700 I.B
- Employees who are subject to a quarantine or isolation order or have been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine, or who are caring for an individual who is subject to a quarantine or isolation order or have been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine, may be eligible for FFCRA Paid Sick Leave or enhanced University leave in accordance with HR-700 I.C
- Employees who have been exposed or are reasonably believed to have been exposed to the coronavirus causing COVID-19, or who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or have a diagnosis of COVID-19, may be eligible for FFCRA Paid Sick Leave or enhanced University leave in accordance with HR-700 I.C
- Employees who may be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 should contact human resources to discuss possible reasonable accommodations in accordance with HR-700 I.H

3. **What if an employee discloses they are at increased risk for COVID-19?**

Employees directed to return to work on site who may be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and their university's human resources office.

Supervisors should direct employees who disclose that they may be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 to their university's human resources office, who may ask employees to describe the type of assistance they think may be needed (e.g. telework or additional precautionary measures). Any requests for disability-related accommodations will be handled in accordance with the normal process for disability accommodations.

4. **May employees be required to wear personal protective equipment (e.g. medical-grade mask, gloves, or gowns)?**

Yes, employees may be required to wear personal protective equipment ("PPE") during a pandemic.

The University is not requiring PPE for all employees directed to return to work on site, but units may implement additional precautionary measures, including requiring employees to wear PPE,

with approval of the President, Chancellor, or their designees. Employees who are directed to wear PPE and who need disability-related accommodations should contact their human resources office.

5. May employees be directed to submit to a medical screening to determine whether they have a fever or other symptoms of COVID-19?

Yes. During a pandemic, employees may be screened for symptoms of COVID-19, including measuring employees' body temperature and asking whether they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.

The University is not requiring medical screenings for all employees directed to return to work on site, but units may implement additional precautionary measures, including medical screenings, with approval of the President, Chancellor, or their designees. Units implementing medical screenings for employees working on site should contact their Human Resources Partner / Consultant for assistance with screening protocols to protect employee confidentiality and safety.

6. Are employees required to report their temperature to their supervisor every day, even if they do not have a fever?

The University is not requiring all employees to report their daily temperature if they do not have a fever. However, in accordance with CDC guidance, employees should measure their own temperature before work each day and notify their supervisor of any temperature over 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit. Employees should remember that coming to work while they may be experiencing COVID-19 symptoms puts themselves and others at risk, and the University has adopted enhanced leave benefits (including additional paid leave) to help employees keep themselves and the rest of the University community safe.

7. May supervisors send employees home if they exhibit symptoms of COVID-19?

Yes. The CDC states that employees who become ill with symptoms associated with COVID-19 at work during a pandemic should leave the workplace. Employees who are sent home or instructed to not come to work because they are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms may use accrued leave or be approved for leave without pay. Employees who are seeking a medical diagnosis may be eligible for FFCRA Paid Sick Leave (See HR-700).

8. How much information may supervisors request from employees who report feeling ill at work or who call in sick?

Supervisors may ask employees who report feeling ill at work or who call in sick if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, including cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain and new loss of taste or smell (see CDC for list of all symptoms). Information about employees' symptoms must be treated as confidential.

9. May a supervisor ask employees to disclose whether they have a medical condition that the CDC says could make them vulnerable to COVID-19?

No. Employees who may be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 should notify their supervisors and their university's human resources office to request reasonable accommodation.

10. May employees be required to provide a doctor's note before returning to working on site?

Yes. During a pandemic, employers may require employees who have been away from the workplace to provide a doctor's note certifying fitness to return to work before returning to the workplace.

The University is not requiring all employees directed to return to work on site to provide a doctor's note prior to returning, but units may implement additional precautionary measures, including requiring employees to provide doctor's notes certifying fitness to work, with approval of the President, Chancellor, or their designees. Units considering requiring doctor's notes should contact their Human Resources Business Partner / Consultant for assistance developing appropriate forms to ensure employee confidentiality. Units should also consider whether, as a practical matter, doctors and other health care professionals in the community may be too busy to provide fitness for duty documentation.

Employees who have had COVID-19 symptoms or diagnosis, or who have been exposed or believe they may have been exposed to the coronavirus causing COVID-19 should notify their supervisors prior to returning to work on site. Employees who may be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 should notify their supervisors and their university's human resources office to request reasonable accommodation.

Appendix A: Other Resources

Please refer to the resources for employees:

- [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#)
- UM System's [Working Through COVID-19](#)
 - Policies in Response to COVID-19
 - FFCRA Leave Request
 - Telework Resources
 - Return to Work Resources



Office of Human Resources

University of Missouri System

University of Missouri System

COLUMBIA | KANSAS CITY | ROLLA | ST. LOUIS