

Committee on Work Resumption

Guide for Returning to the Workplace

This is a general guideline developed to provide a pathway for resuming work activity on campus during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes protocols on working on-site and remotely. The document will change as the pandemic enters into different phases. Individual departments and divisions will also develop protocols specific to their areas, using this as a guide. Caltech's plans will be aligned with state and local public health authorities as well as government ordered reopening protocols. Changes to this document and policies may be made by the Institute with or without notice.

Guiding Principles

Caltech will adhere to these guiding principles in making future decisions about a phased return to work on campus:

- Our first priority is the health and safety of our employees and their families.
- The return to on-site work on campus will be gradual, methodical, and based on implementation of applicable public health and safety protocols.
- Federal, state, and local public health guidelines and orders will generally take precedence over Caltech policy, except when Caltech has developed stricter protocols.
- Personnel who are not comfortable returning to on-site work should talk with their manager and Human Resources at the time they are asked to report on-site.
- Teleworking will continue for the foreseeable future.
- Work conditions on campus will promote physical distancing and other precautions to reduce the risk for potentially spreading disease.
- Campus will provide timely updates on the incidence of COVID-19 in our community, while safeguarding details to protect private health information.

Our community's remarkable response and adaptation to the pandemic should continue with a controlled and systematic return.

Symptom Monitoring

Do not come to work if you are sick. If you start to feel sick while you are working, go home immediately. Contact your supervisor when you arrive home to inform them you are ill and have left work.

Prior to traveling to work, take your temperature; if it is 100°F/37.8°C or higher, do not report to work. Staff who return to the workplace will conduct symptom monitoring prior to starting work. Please see:

[https://coronavirus.caltech.edu/documents/14191/5.31.20 Health Attestation and Location Log.pdf](https://coronavirus.caltech.edu/documents/14191/5.31.20%20Health%20Attestation%20and%20Location%20Log.pdf)

Take your temperature at the beginning and end of your work day. If it is 100°F/37.8°C or higher, you will not be allowed to work and will be sent home.

- Log the results in a personal log and report any fever to your supervisor. COVID-19 is often detected through the gradual increase in temperature over multiple days.
- Report any exposure to COVID-19 positive individuals or COVID-19 related symptoms to the Human Resources Disability and Leave Administration Unit (DLAU) at 626-395-3092.
- If the employee reports symptoms of illness, a positive test for COVID-19, or direct exposure/close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, their supervisor must require that the employee stay home, and the employee should seek guidance from their healthcare provider.
- If an employee tests positive for COVID-19 they are required to inform the Disability and Leave Administration Unit in Human Resources. Student employees should report any illness to the Student Wellness Center.
- In accordance with Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH), if you have any of the symptoms identified by the CDC, you must stay home until at least 10 days have passed after your symptoms first appeared AND at least 3 days after you have recovered. Recovery means that your fever is gone for 72 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications and your respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath) have improved. Even if your test result is negative, you must remain at home for the full time, to prevent spreading your illness to others.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>) reports that people with COVID-19 have reported a wide range of symptoms – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Some of the symptoms may include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue

- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

If you have any symptoms of illness (apart from those attributable to seasonal allergies or a diagnosed chronic medical condition), you should contact your health care provider for assistance and self-isolate per your health care provider and/or public health guidelines. Employees with a positive diagnosis are also asked to inform DLAU.

According to the CDC, **older adults and people who have severe underlying medical conditions** like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness. The CDC has noted the following conditions may include:

- Older adults (aged 65 years and older)
- People with HIV
- Asthma (moderate-to-severe)
- Chronic lung disease
- Diabetes
- Serious heart conditions
- Chronic kidney disease being treated with dialysis
- Severe obesity
- Being immunocompromised

Staff members who have been instructed to return to work on-site and have concerns about doing so due to: (1) a medical condition that places them in a higher risk group; (2) those who are pregnant; or (3) those who wish to seek ADA Reasonable Accommodations related to returning to the workplace should contact the Disability and Leave Administration Unit in Human Resources for assistance at 626-395-3092.

The Institute has leave policies that support faculty and staff to stay at home when they are sick, when household members are sick, or when they are required by a healthcare provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household. These policies include:

[Paid Time Off for Benefit-based Employees](#)
[Paid Time Off for Non-Benefit Based Employees](#)
[Employee Medical and Family Care Leaves](#)
[COVID-19 Temporary Personnel Memorandum](#)

Phased Staffing

Caltech will return employees to campus over time in a gradual and coordinated manner.

Caltech will return employees to work based on: (1) essential or critical operations; (2) ability to control and manage specific work environments; and (3) necessity to access on-site resources. These decisions, once approved, will be communicated through your respective chair, vice president, or appropriate manager.

The need to reduce the number of people on campus (density) to meet physical distancing requirements will continue for some time. Managers will determine who in their group(s) can continue to effectively work remotely until restrictions are eased for increased occupancy.

Expanded staffing will be tightly controlled and coordinated to reduce risks to students, faculty, and staff, as well as the communities we serve. No division or department should increase staffing levels beyond current needs to support critical on-site operations without approval from your respective chair, vice president or manager. Once decisions to increase campus staffing in certain areas have been made, staff should follow this guide for returning to work on campus.

Employees who are already providing essential functions or those who have been approved to conduct essential research and have been working on-site already, will continue to do so without the need to seek additional approval through this process. However, they should be considered in the population density evaluation and the decision made by each unit.

It is important to note that this plan will evolve as necessary in response to the public health conditions in California and/or Los Angeles County, guidance from the Los Angeles County and Pasadena Departments of Public Health and the CDC. We fully expect that, over time, the plan will allow more and more faculty and staff to return to campus and other Institute facilities. JPL employees will follow the Lab-specific guidance. Institute leaders will continue to revise this plan and communicate updates to all faculty and staff as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves. Updates will be posted at coronavirus.caltech.edu.

Staffing Options

Once employees have been instructed to return to work on-site, there are several options managers and supervisors should consider to maintain required physical distancing measures and reduce population density within buildings and work spaces.

Remote Work: Those who can work remotely to fulfill some or all of their work responsibilities should continue to do so to reduce the number of individuals on campus. These arrangements, which should be approved by the immediate supervisor, can be done in a full or partial day/week schedule as appropriate.

Alternating Days: In order to limit the number of individuals and interactions among those on campus, departments may schedule partial staffing on alternating days. Such schedules will help enable physical distancing, especially in areas with large shared workspaces.

Staggered Reporting/Departing: The beginning and end of the workday typically bring many people together at common entry/exit points of buildings. Staggering reporting and departure times by at least 30 minutes will reduce traffic in common areas to meet physical distancing requirements.

Scheduling Cohorts: Work with the laboratory groups and other support operations in the building to coordinate shifts across all laboratories when possible so that the population can be split into cohorts that have minimal overlap.

Personal Safety Practices

Face coverings: Use face coverings anytime you are inside a campus building or in close proximity to others while outside. Face coverings may be removed for the purpose of recording, filming or online meetings, if others are more than 6 feet/2 meters away and all surfaces and equipment are sanitized after use. *Note: Individuals with chronic respiratory conditions, or other medical conditions that make use of a face covering hazardous are exempted from this requirement.*

Appropriate use of face coverings is critical in minimizing the spread of large respiratory droplets to those around you, which can help prevent the spread of disease. You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick. The face covering is not a substitute for physical distancing.

Caltech will provide two face coverings per employee upon their return to on-site work. Employees are encouraged to obtain their own face coverings to ensure that they have an ample supply for everyday use and individual fit. If you forget to bring your face

covering, disposable face coverings will be provided by Caltech. Employees should contact their supervisors if disposable masks are needed. Disposable masks may only be worn for one day and then must be placed in the trash.

Use and care of face coverings

Putting on the face covering:

- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer prior to handling the face coverings.
- Ensure the face covering fits over the nose and under the chin.
- Situate the face covering properly with nose wire snug against the nose (where applicable).
- Tie straps behind the head and neck or loop around the ears.
- Throughout the process: Avoid touching the front of the face covering.

Taking off the face covering:

- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth when removing the face covering.
- When taking off the face covering, loop your finger into the strap and pull the strap away from the ear, or untie the straps.
- Wash hands immediately after removing.

Care, storage, and laundering:

- Keep face coverings stored in a paper (not plastic) bag when not in use.
- Cloth face coverings should be used for no more than one day; they should be washed between each use.
- Cloth face coverings should be properly laundered with regular clothing detergent before first use, and after each shift.
- Cloth face coverings should be replaced immediately if soiled, damaged (e.g. ripped, punctured) or visibly contaminated.
- Disposable face coverings must not be used for more than one day and should be placed in the trash after your shift or if it is soiled, damaged (e.g., stretched ear loops, torn or punctured material) or visibly contaminated.

Physical Distancing:

Keeping space between you and others is one of the best risk control measures to slow the spread of disease. Do not shake hands with people or have physical contact. Upon greeting someone, a wave, bow or simple verbal greeting is recommended.

Since people can spread the virus before they know they are sick, it is important to always practice physical distancing even if you have no symptoms or illness. Staff at work on campus should follow these physical distancing practices:

- Stay at least 6 feet/2 meters (about 2 arm's length) from other people at all times
- Do not gather in groups or congregate in common spaces
- Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings

- Avoid in-person meetings. If you must meet, do so in a large office or conference room where you can keep 6 feet/2 meters distance between you, and limit the amount of time individuals are together in an enclosed space. If possible, keep doors and windows open to increase airflow.

Handwashing:

Wash your hands when starting and ending your work day and frequently throughout the day. Wash your hands 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. At all times, avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth, and wash your hands after touching your face.

Gloves:

According to the CDC, gloves are not necessary for general use and do not replace good hand hygiene. Washing your hands often is considered the best practice for common everyday tasks. Healthcare workers and others in high-risk areas who are trained in proper use of gloves should use them as part of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) relevant to their work activities.

Goggles/Face Shields:

Staff do not need to wear goggles or face shields as part of general activity on campus. Good hand hygiene and avoiding touching your face are generally sufficient for non-healthcare environments.

Personal Work Place Sanitation:

Custodial crews will continue to clean office and work spaces based on CDC guidelines. Individuals should also wipe down their work areas and commonly used surfaces. Before starting work and before leaving any room in which you have been working, wipe down all work areas with an EPA-approved cleaning solution. This includes any shared-space locations or equipment (e.g. copiers, printers, computers, A/V and other electrical equipment, desks and tables, light switches, door knobs, etc.).

Coughing/Sneezing Hygiene:

Individuals are to wear face coverings at all times when in campus buildings. When outside, in a private office with a closed door, or other situations when you may not be wearing a face covering, be sure to always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow. Then 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.

Guidance for Specific Workplace Scenarios

Public Transportation:

If you take public transportation, wear a face covering before entering the bus or train and avoid touching surfaces with your hands. Upon disembarking, wash your hands or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol as soon as possible and before removing your face covering. Remember to avoid touching the outside of the face covering with your hands.

Working in Office Environments:

If you work in an office with an open floor plan, be sure to maintain at least 6 feet/2 meters distance from co-workers. If possible have at least one workspace separating you from another co-worker. You should wear a face covering at all times while in a building. When outside, in a private office with a closed door, or other situations when you may not be wearing a face covering, be sure to always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.

Departments should assess open work environments and meeting rooms to implement 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.
- Place one-way directional signage for large open work spaces with multiple through-ways to increase distance between employees moving through the space.
- Set physical distancing and cleaning protocols for areas where individuals may commonly gather or use shared resources.

Using Restrooms:

Individuals should practice 6 feet/2 meters distancing as practicable, while using restrooms. Wear your face covering and wash your hands thoroughly afterward.

Using Elevators:

Limit the number of individuals in an elevator to ensure the correct physical distancing protocols are being followed. If you are using the elevator, wear your face covering and avoid touching the elevator buttons with your exposed hand/fingers, if possible.

Meetings:

In-person meetings are strongly discouraged as convening in groups increases the risk of viral transmission. If you must meet, do so in a large office or conference room where you can keep 6 feet/2 meters distance between you, and limit the amount of time

individuals are together in an enclosed space and wear face coverings. If possible, keep doors and windows open to increase airflow.

Where feasible, meetings should be held in whole or part using the extensive range of available collaboration tools (e.g. Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams, telephone, etc.).

Departments should remove or rearrange chairs and tables or add visual cue marks in meeting rooms to support physical distancing practices between attendees.

During your time on-site, you are encouraged to communicate with your colleagues and supervisors as needed by email, instant message, telephone or other available technology rather than face-to-face. You can also use a range of available collaboration tools (e.g. Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams, etc.).

Meals:

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 your face covering until you are ready to eat and then replace it afterward. Eating establishments must meet requirements to allow at least 6 feet/2 meters of distance between each customer, including lines and seating arrangements. Individuals should not sit facing one another. Staff are encouraged to take food back to their office area or eat outside, if this is reasonable for your situation. Shared coffee pots should be turned off. No unpackaged food can be provided to be shared with employees.

If you are eating in your work environment, maintain 6 feet/2 meters distance between you and others. If possible, break rooms/lunchrooms should be closed for gathering. Individuals should not sit facing one another. Only remove your face covering in order to eat, then put it back on. Departments should remove or rearrange chairs and tables or add visual cue marks in employee break rooms to support physical distancing practices between employees. Wipe all surfaces after use in shared areas.

Laboratory Work:

Specific protocols have been developed for faculty, postdoctoral scholars, students and staff working in laboratory environments. Please contact your supervisor if you work in a laboratory.

Mental and Emotional Wellbeing

Staff and Faculty Consultation Center: (SFCC) is available to offer emotional support during this stressful period. Telephonic or video counseling is available, and you can access this service using most smartphones, tablets and computers with a camera. You may contact SFCC by calling 626-395-8360.

Custodial

Custodial staff will clean and sanitize buildings on a regular basis to reduce the spread of viruses and risk of exposure to occupants and workers by following the CDC recommendations and guidance. Additionally, custodial staff are trained on cleaning procedures to disinfect facilities when necessary. Cleaning frequency will increase by several fold as campus spaces are re-occupied as described below:

- **High-traffic areas and frequently touched surfaces:** Cleaning and sanitizing will be performed three times per day (table tops, doorknobs, light switches, counter tops, handles/rails, drinking fountains/bottle filling stations, vending machine buttons, shared printers and copy machines, elevator button/panels and stairwells).
- **Restrooms:** Cleaning and sanitizing three times per day (toilets, sinks, faucets, handles, light switches, check and replenish dispensers).
- **Kitchens areas:** Cleaning and sanitizing three times per day (counter tops, tables, sink, faucets/handles, dispensers, light switches, wipe appliances).
- **Soft and porous materials:** Carpets and upholstered furniture will be vacuumed once per week and sanitized with EPA approved cleaner.
- **Hard floors:** Floors, including stairwells will be swept and wet mopped once per week with an approved EPA cleaner.