

June 23, 2021

Dear EES Colleagues,

We have received new guidelines from MSU and the College, and MSU employees are now able to return to work following guidelines set by the College and approved by MSU. The College framework document was based on a highly proscriptive template handed down from above, and is appended to this PDF file following this letter. This framework supplants all older COVID-related building plans, and also the COVID-related components of all older lab-specific plans. I have seen indications that MSU is targeting a full return to work in the office by August 15.

The Department office will be re-opening after the July 4 holiday, meaning that at least one of the Department staff will normally be in the office during working hours. We will be developing a progressive back to the office schedule for the department staff soon.

Employees who come to work on-site will need to complete COVID-19 training (see below) and still need to fill out the Health Screening form every day. Links are available on the Department website, in the College plan, and the MSU app.

The approved guidelines place almost no restrictions on employees who are fully vaccinated and declare that on the daily health screening form, **but employees who are not vaccinated or who choose not to disclose their vaccination status do need to wear masks and observe social distancing**. Full details are in the College document.

Employees are welcome to wear masks if they choose to do so for any reason.

Supervisors and PIs need to find a way to make accommodations if they or some member of their group is not vaccinated or chooses not to disclose, compatible with the guidelines handed down to us. We are supposed to accommodate both the vaccinated and unvaccinated, although the rules for the two groups are different.

Also, it is important to note that for employees who are working on-site or with other MSU employees off-site, there are notification requirements if anyone gets symptoms of COVID-19 or has a confirmed COVID-19 case. Again, details are in the College document.

Before returning to on-site work, all employees must do the following:

1. Complete the EHS COVID-19 safety training (<https://ehs.msu.edu/covid-19/covid-19-training.html>) before coming on-site to work. Anyone who has already completed any of the previous EHS COVID-19 trainings (including the "Return to Laboratory Work" training last summer) does NOT need to repeat the training. If someone has not yet completed any of the trainings, the "COVID-19 Safe Return to Work" training is currently the most up-to-date module.
2. Review the NatSci "Return-to-Work Framework" document (appended after this letter). All employees are required to follow the guidelines in that document.
3. Email Ami McMurphy (mcmurph2@msu.edu) when you have completed the "COVID-19 Safe Return to Work" training (or if you have completed the earlier, more stringent training), and that you have reviewed, understand, and agree to follow the "Return-to-Work Framework" document.



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At that point, employees are free to return to work, and should discuss timelines for that with their supervisor if needed. Supervisors are expected to maintain flexibility and give employees sufficient time to schedule a return to work in the office (~4 weeks recommended), although employees who are ready to come back to work in the office sooner are welcome to do so.

We can expect further changes in guidelines to come into play around the middle of August, but I do not have any new information about that yet, although I expect they will be closer to pre-pandemic rules. There are also discussions going on at higher levels about how to handle long-term hybrid blending of work at home and work in the office. No long-term arrangements can be made at this time until new guidelines have been worked out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey T. Freymueller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dr. Jeffrey T. Freymueller, Professor and Interim Chair
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RETURNING TO ON-SITE WORK

College of Natural Science

Issued: May 2020; Revised June 2021

Required Planning
Document for all
MAUs

Returning to On-Site Work Protocols and Procedures

I. Introduction

At Michigan State University, we have taken several steps to mitigate the risks to our employees and our campus community through increased safety measures, increased cleaning and sanitation, protocols, and adjusting our operations at the guidance of the university administration and federal, state, and local officials and public health agencies.

At MSU, we care about people. The safety of our employees is the top priority and will always be at the forefront of decision-making, especially in response to the public health crisis. We are committed to the safety and support of our colleagues, students, and partners. We will continue to support their safety in all that we do.

Units are required to conduct training, provide employees with written expectations and retain records as indicated in this document. Further updates will be made as situations change. In addition, MSU may include requirements that go above and beyond the state of Michigan requirements.

Given the cross-functional use of many of our buildings, the overall planning for occupancy and reopening is anticipated to consider a range of regulations and guidelines. MAU leaders should review all documentation and customize it for the unit's specific needs with these minimal standards.

Each MAU will need to have a plan approved before returning employees to on-site. Larger units or units with unique needs may need additional information to cover the scope of operations. Return completed plans to Lt. Dave Oslund at MSU Police oslundD@msu.edu. Do not return employees until your plan has been approved.

II. Foundation for Returning On-Site Work Procedures and Protocols

As a matter of health and life safety, MSU has reviewed several inputs to ensure the protection of employees and their health and minimize the spread of COVID-19. The inputs to the procedures and protocols as outlined include:

- CDC guidance
- MIOSHA regulations and guidance
- University Policy

III. Returning to On-site Work

For the purpose of this document, "employees" refers to Faculty, Support Staff, and Student employees unless specifically indicated. All employees of the College of Natural Science (NatSci) are expected to participate in additional training sessions with the primary trainer to fully understand what is expected of them when they return on-site.

A. Screening Program

i. Employee Procedures:

All employees entering campus facilities must participate in the MSU employee screening system. You will be required to complete the "Employee Health Screening form upon entering campus. [Employees can access the health screening form here.](#)

It is suggested that employees download the MSU app for easy access by smartphone. [MSU App Info](#)

ii. Vendor and Consultant Procedures

Consultants and vendors conducting on-premise projects at MSU are expected to minimally follow the MSU COVID-19 protocols or their own that meets MSU expectations. Plans are required to specifically address how they will work safely and follow and MSU guidelines. NatSci departments and programs are required to verify that consultants and vendors provide screening information. [Vendor Screening Form](#)

B. Protocols in the Event of a Confirmed Case of COVID-19

Employees must notify their supervisor or the supervisor on duty if they experience any symptoms of COVID-19 or have a suspected or confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19.

Notification for a confirmed case of COVID-19:

i. Employees

- Inform your supervisor and immediately go home if you are at the workplace.
- Your supervisor will contact the MSU Triage line (855) 958-2678 to report your work history over the past week, with a description of the work environment and list and co-workers/contractors with whom you had contact.
- See follow-up care through your health care provider.
- Do not return to work until cleared by the local county health department and/or the Office of the University Physician.

ii. Supervisors ONLY:

- Contact the MSU Triage line (855) 958-2678.
- Contact EHS (517) 355-0153 or email ehs@msu.edu to discuss the potential need for deep cleaning via a contracted cleaning service through IPF.
- EHS and/or the Office of the University Physician may advise to temporarily close all or part of the worksite to allow for deep cleaning.
- Do not permit the employee to return to work until cleared by the local county health department and/or the Office of the University Physician.
- Inform individuals who may have come into contact with the known case of COVID-19 while maintaining the privacy and anonymity of the employee who is suspected of having or is diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Maintain a record of all steps taken separately from the employee's personnel file. Maintain confidentiality.

iii. Office of the University Physician

- Maintain a record of all steps taken separately from the employee's personnel file. Maintain confidentiality.
- Advise on any cleaning and sanitation procedures that may need to be performed.

C. Common Areas:

Users of common areas such as supply and copy rooms, kitchenettes, or breakrooms share a responsibility to disinfect and sanitize high-touch surfaces between the formal cleaning completed by Custodial Services.

Building/facility procedures for all Employees

- Building Custodial Services will continue the increased cleaning of touch surfaces in NatSci common areas with a goal of two cleanings per day. Additionally, the department will supply cleaning products if needed for additional cleaning of these spaces.
- NatSci employees must regularly clean and disinfect commonly shared items such as refrigerators, breakrooms, copy machines, etc.
- All restrooms will be cleaned regularly using a disinfectant, at least twice per day, in the morning and evening or after times of heavy use. IPF Custodial Services will ensure bathrooms are continuously stocked with soap and paper towels and ensure trash cans are emptied regularly. Proper hand-washing protocols are posted in each bathroom location across campus.

D. Personal Protective Equipment

All Employee procedures

Face coverings

All faculty, staff, students, contractors, suppliers, vendors and visitors who will be indoors on campus are **required to wear a face covering, except those who have attested to their fully vaccinated status on the daily health screening form.**

If you must wear a face-covering:

- The only exception is when you are in your assigned office space, a private, single-occupancy office or lap space with the door closed where you can reasonably expect other individuals not to enter.
- The department/program will provide one face-covering per employee. It will be the employee's responsibility to have a face covering them upon entering their place of work. Face coverings will not be provided every time entering campus.
- If you have been assigned a face covering and forget to bring it with you, you will need to make arrangements to provide your own face covering.

E. Physical Distancing Program, Except for those Attesting fully Vaccinated Status

It is required that all employees—other than those indicating they are vaccinated on the daily health screening form—stay at least 6 feet (-2 meters) from other people whenever such distance is possible.

F. Transportation

Fully vaccinated individuals may now carpool for research or other work-related activities. Those who are not vaccinated must wear a mask and are limited to only two (2) individuals per vehicle.

G. Record Keeping

Records of training, screening, and notification of confirmed COVID-19 cases are required. The NatSci department/program will follow current unit tracking processes for training and employee documents. Documents are to be sent to the designated department/program HR manager.

H. Summary

All NatSci employees, at a minimum, are expected to adhere to these protocols and guidelines. Employees who do not follow these procedures and protocols may be subject to personnel action.

- The NatSci department/program will provide instructional resources and learning opportunities related to equipment, procedures, and information necessary to adhere to the outlined expectations.
- Communication of these resources will happen via virtual training sessions, informational emails, and individual outreach, as necessary.
- The NatSci department/program will monitor the effectiveness of implementing these protocols and procedures for the next 6 to 12 months or a directed.
- Additional indicators of progress that will be monitored include, but are not limited to:
 - Assessment and evaluation component via training.
 - Reporting and incidence rate associated with return to on-site work expectations.
 - Results of the MSU screening program rate of illness.
 - Natural feedback mechanisms.

As measures of effectiveness and guidelines form and the identified inputs shift, NatSci may change this plan. Any change will be communicated in a timely manner. Additional training and instructional resources will be provided, if necessary.

- NatSci employees may be experiencing high amounts of anxiety and stress related to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated changes to work and personal lives.
- NatSci departments/programs will remind employees of their access to resources, such as:
 - Employee Assistance Program and MSU Health4U for counseling (<https://eap.msu.edu/>)
 - MSU WorkLife Office for tips and resources on taking care of yourself (<https://worklife.msu.edu>)
- Your supervisor can help you in accessing these services. [HR Website](#).

I. References

Please find references used as a basis for this document listed below:

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[Ingham County Health Department - Coronavirus](#)

[Michigan State University - Coronavirus](#)

[MSU Environmental Health and Safety](#)

[Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#)

[State of Michigan - Coronavirus](#)

[World Health Organization](#)

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