



**FLORIDA POLYTECHNIC
UNIVERSITY**

Return to the Workplace Guidelines

Fall Semester 2020

**Staff Return to the Workplace Committee
June 26, 2020**

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Guiding Principles

Florida Polytechnic University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to be guided by the need to care for and safeguard the health and safety of our entire University community, including staff, faculty, students, vendors, and visitors to our main campus, Florida Poly South, and the Florida Industrial and Phosphate Research Institute (FIPR).

We are committed to protecting public health and maintaining an educational and work environment that prioritizes the well-being of our community while providing students a world-class STEM education.

The data-driven approach detailed in this plan follows regulations, best practices, and guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and state and local officials. Our plans will adapt and respond to evolving COVID-19 guidance as the weeks progress and more is understood about the novel coronavirus.

Protecting the health of the Florida Poly community will require long-term effort with commitment, cooperation, teamwork, and flexibility. We cannot guarantee that no one will contract the virus in our facilities, but the protocols we have created will lower our collective risk. To this end, a campus COVID-19 Commitment is being developed to support policies currently in place. This Commitment will function as an informative tool and as an agreement that the individual will adhere to the campus COVID-19 protocols and guidance.

Ultimately, minimizing risk in the work and study environment outlined here will require a commitment to institutional, personal, and shared responsibility.

Institutional Responsibility

We recognize the University's enormous responsibility for setting the pace and modeling the behaviors we should all be undertaking to protect ourselves and one another. As an institution, Florida Poly is committed to taking the actions needed to create a healthier environment where we can feel more comfortable returning to work.

As part of this, we have detailed specific steps the institution is taking in preparation for the return of employees, students, and visitors to our facilities. Please be aware that these are only a starting point – we will continue revising our plans and acting in the best interest of our University community as we learn more about COVID-19.

Building Management

Florida Poly is working to manage infrastructure at our facilities to ensure our physical worksites better support a healthy work and educational environment.

- **Touchless Entry Alternatives:** These have been identified at entry door locations and in the cafeteria. The University is evaluating installation of automated door openers for these high-traffic areas.
- **Partitions, Room Arrangement, and Signage:** Partitions are being put in place for key locations where transactional interactions occur. Furniture is being rearranged to encourage appropriate distance between people. Signage will be installed where appropriate to remind everyone to stay physically separated by at least six feet.
- **Optimized Airflow:** The University is actively examining ways to improve airflow and air quality at our main campus.

Cleaning and Disinfection

We have always prioritized and been proud of the cleanliness of our facilities, but the spread of COVID-19 in our state and Polk County have brought their critical importance into sharp focus. We began enhanced cleaning and disinfection processes during the Spring 2020 semester when the threat of coronavirus became apparent. Since then, we've refined and updated our cleaning protocols and schedules with a focus on minimizing exposure to hazards, reviewing space and cleaning needs, and optimizing the frequency and type of cleaning performed. We also have created new guidelines to help us maintain a clean and more secure environment for our return for the Fall 2020 semester and beyond.

Facilities and Safety Services will continue directing the cleaning of offices and workspaces at our main campus and FIPR based on CDC guidelines and protocols for disinfection. Cleaning at Florida Poly South is managed by Polk State College and will be consistent with our enhanced cleaning protocols. This work includes:

- Enhanced cleaning protocols for high-touch areas (e.g., door handles, light switches, handrails, interior doors, common spaces, tables, elevator buttons, etc.).
- Increased cleaning in restrooms and in common areas.
- Hand sanitizer stations at building entrances, in elevators, and in high-traffic areas.

Areas that were occupied by a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be closed, cleaned based on CDC protocols, and reopened once sanitized.

Building occupants at all locations should also wipe down commonly used surfaces before and after each use. This includes any private workspace or shared-space location or equipment (e.g. copiers, printers, computers, A/V and other electrical equipment, desks and tables, light switches, doorknobs, handles, etc.).

Surveillance Protocols

One of the best tools we have for minimizing the spread of COVID-19 is monitoring our individual health and symptoms.

The campus will provide employees with an app-based Baseline Symptom Screening Assessment for COVID-19 risk factors. The screening assessment will be developed under the direction of the Florida Poly Medical Advisory Board and will take users through several CDC-identified symptoms of COVID-19 combined with other issues like travel. Employees should take the screening assessment prior to arrival on campus.

Although many people infected with COVID-19 are symptom free, the most prevalent symptom is a fever. Contactless temperature kiosks are being installed at key entrances across our facilities so everyone can have the opportunity to monitor their temperature daily and in private. Guidance on what to do if a person has a high temperature will be provided at all kiosks. Employee personal temperature reading is not recorded by the University, but it can be used as a key indicator for the individual.

Contact Tracing

Contact tracing is the process of identifying people who may have come into contact with someone who is infected with COVID-19. It's an important part of minimizing the spread of this virus and something we will all be prioritizing as we move through the fall semester. The Florida Department of Health oversees contact tracing and we will follow their guidance and instruction to assist in their efforts as we move forward. Florida Poly primary contact with the Department of Health is Danial Bartle, Florida Poly Emergency Management Officer.

Florida Poly is also monitoring tracing app technology and will consider adopting any that protect our campus community.

Mental and Emotional Well-Being

While we will be returning to our workplaces for the Fall 2020 semester, we recognize that many of our daily actions will be far from what we'd consider "normal." While each of us may have grown somewhat accustomed to our new way of life, we recognize that we are all still living and working in a crisis environment. It is only natural to feel mentally strained, overwhelmed, stressed, depressed, or just out of sorts as we all continue living and working amid the pandemic.

Employees should prioritize their mental and emotional well-being, and the University recognizes our responsibility to provide understanding and access to resources that can help.

- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP).** The EAP is available to offer emotional support during this stressful period.

Phone or video counseling is available using smartphones, tablets, and computers with a camera. The BayCare EAP may be contacted by calling 800-878-5470 or by email at BayCareEAP@BayCare.org

- **Wellness Checks**

If you are sick, especially with any of the COVID-19 symptoms, (listed in the Symptom Monitoring section), or believe you were exposed to someone with COVID-19, contact your healthcare provider.

Personal Responsibility

We're all in this together. Every person at every Florida Poly location – main campus, Florida Poly South, and FIPR – has an immense personal responsibility to act in a way that protects themselves, their coworkers, and everyone they may encounter during their workday.

The University expects every employee to follow the guidelines detailed in this section. Although some of the actions you will be asked to take may be uncomfortable or inconvenient, each of them is critically important to our efforts to keep COVID-19 out of our classrooms, offices, and facilities. It's up to each of us to do everything we can to protect those around us.

Workplace Expectations and Guidelines

All University employees are required to fully comply with the protocols and guidelines outlined in this document as part of the Florida Poly return-to-work plan.

The individual responsibilities listed here cover a broad range of actions, including training, COVID-19 protocols, symptom monitoring, social distancing, use of face coverings, and other protective actions.

Training Requirements and Pledge

Before returning to work, all employees must complete an online training designed to create awareness for following appropriate protocols while at any Florida Poly property.

A campus COVID-19 Commitment is also being developed to support policies currently in place. This Commitment will function as an informative tool and as an agreement that the individual will adhere to both personal and shared responsibilities.

Symptom Monitoring

Employees are expected to conduct daily symptom monitoring using the Baseline Symptom Screening Assessment tool. Below is a current list of some COVID-19 symptoms that may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus:

- Fever or chills (repeated shaking with 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
- New GI Symptoms (nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea)

Campus employees are expected to also take their temperature in private at the thermal kiosks prior to entering any campus building. Employees with temperatures of 100.4°F or greater, or those exhibiting other symptoms of COVID-19, must stay at home or go home and immediately contact their healthcare provider. They must also notify their supervisor and Human Resources (863-874-8425 or hr@floridapoly.edu).

Employees who test negative for COVID-19 should not return to work until they are free of fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines.

Employees who test positive for COVID-19 should also not return to work until they have a physician's statement that they are free of COVID-19.

If you are exposed to someone with COVID-19 you should self-isolate and regularly assess your symptoms for 14 days to monitor your exposure and risk of infection.

Human Resources will manage all notifications and clearances for employees to return to work.

High-Risk Individuals

The novel coronavirus has been shown to affect some high-risk populations more severely than others. We recognize our diverse body of employees includes people who may be identified as higher risk by the CDC and we urge their ongoing vigilance as they work to protect themselves from the virus.

Some factors that may increase your risk of developing serious complications from COVID-19 include:

- Being age 65 or older
- HIV positive
- Asthma (moderate to severe)
- Chronic lung disease
- Diabetes
- Serious heart conditions
- Chronic kidney disease being treated with dialysis
- Severe obesity
- Being immunocompromised

Accommodations: Employees with any of these conditions who believe they are at high risk should contact Human Resources (863-874-8425 or hr@floridapoly.edu) to begin an interactive process of granting reasonable accommodations.

Physical/Social Distancing

Avoiding infected air and surfaces is one of the best ways each of us can avoid being exposed to COVID-19. Health experts have recognized that maintaining at least six feet between yourself and others at all times can limit your exposure and minimize transmission of the virus.

All students, employees, vendors, and visitors to any Florida Poly facility should strive to maintain at least six feet of distance to others at all times while on University premises. Since people can spread the virus before they know they are sick, it is important to stay away from others even if you or they have no symptoms. Physical/social distancing is important for everyone, but especially to help protect people who are at higher risk.

Face Coverings

According to the CDC, wearing face coverings is an effective way to prevent transferring germs to another person. Disposable and reusable cloth face coverings that cover both the nose and mouth help contain a person's respiratory emissions and help prevent COVID-19 from spreading.

All employees must have face coverings (e.g., disposable or reusable cloth coverings) in public settings while at work. During this first phase of reopening:

- Face coverings are required during all indoor meetings including small groups, classes, and any instances in which physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Face coverings are recommended at all other times such as short one-on-one meetings, when outdoors, in restrooms, working in a partitioned workspace, and walking between meetings.

Please note that:

- Face coverings are not a substitute for physical/social distancing.
- Cloth face coverings should be worn for one day only and must be properly laundered before using again. Having multiple cloth face coverings can help reduce the need for daily laundering.
- Disposable masks may be used but can only be worn for one day and then must be placed in the trash.
- Employees who have difficulty wearing a face covering (due to medical or other reasons), should contact Human Resources (863-874-8425 or hr@floridapoly.edu) to discuss the possibility of reasonable accommodations.
- Wearing a face covering is not required while working alone in a confined office space or when walking on campus and physically separated.

Handwashing

Handwashing has long been a major tool in maintaining good public health. We recognize the need for good handwashing practices among everyone at Florida Poly and are instructing all employees to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Employees must wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after being in a public place.
- Hands should be washed often including when arriving to the workplace, after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose, after using the restroom, before making and after eating food, or after touching shared surfaces.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol alcohol. All surfaces of the hands should be rubbed together until they feel dry and after 20 seconds.
- Everyone should avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth, and should wash their hands after touching their face.

According to the CDC, gloves are not necessary for general use and do not replace good hand hygiene. Washing hands often is considered best practice for controlling the spread of the virus and should become part of a person's routine.

Employees are not required to wear goggles or face shields as part of their general activities at work. The CDC states that good hand hygiene and avoiding touching the face are generally sufficient rather than using this protective equipment.

Coughing/Sneezing Hygiene

Coughing and sneezing while at work is bound to happen. Allergies, irritants, and other causes make these normal functions unavoidable.

While we can't prevent these potential infection-spreading actions from happening, we can control how we handle them.

- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue. Immediately dispose of 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, hands must be cleaned with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol alcohol.

Entering and Exiting Buildings

Each of us must remember to take infection prevention measures. We've created simple guidance for employees to follow when entering and exiting buildings, offices, and other facilities:

- After entering a building, sanitize your hands at the nearest sanitizer station.
- Everyone is required to comply with all signage, including physical/social distancing guidelines.
- Be prepared to change your daily routine to adhere to new circulation patterns.

Shared Responsibility

Some necessary actions for creating a healthy workplace rest with both the University and everyone within it. We all have a shared responsibility to help protect the health of ourselves and everyone we encounter.

We have identified several actions we all must take to further secure our overall health and minimize the spread of COVID-19. There are situations in which you will find yourself near others on campus or at your worksite, and we want to be sure each of us is acting in a way that is in the best interest of those around us.

These include considering staffing options, creating healthy workspaces, and being mindful while engaging in common activities like restroom use and holding meetings. By sharing in these responsibilities and affirming our commitment to one another's safety, Florida Poly will be a healthier place to work.

Staffing Options

Job functions and requirements are vastly different across University departments and work locations. For those locations where the population density in workspaces prohibits effective physical distancing, work schedules may be staggered by adjusting workday hours or having employees work alternating days.

Signage and Posters

Building occupants are expected to follow signage on traffic flow through building entrances and exits, stairs, elevators, and common use areas. Signs that need to be posted throughout our facilities will be made available by the University.

Common Activities

Things we do every day carry the potential of transmitting the virus, even if we feel healthy. We have created guidance for several scenarios you may encounter in your day-to-day work life.

Restroom Use

- Please do not go into a crowded restroom if you cannot maintain appropriate physical separation.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after using the facilities.

Elevator Use

- Use the stairs whenever possible.
- Elevator capacity is suggested at two persons, while maintaining six feet of physical separation.
- When using the elevator, wear a face covering and avoid touching the elevator buttons with exposed hand/fingers – try to use an object like a pen or tissue-covered finger instead.
- Upon departing the elevator, wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Meetings

- Meetings should continue to be held using technology (e.g., Microsoft Teams or Webex) whenever possible.
- In-person meetings will be limited to the restrictions established by local, state, and federal agencies, assuming individuals can maintain the six-foot distancing requirement.
- Wear a face covering while attending a meeting or sharing space in a common room.
- Meeting rooms should have limited numbers of chairs and tables, as well as visual cue marks to support physical/social distancing practices between attendees. Facilities and Safety Services is available to assist as needed.
- While at work, you are encouraged to communicate with colleagues and supervisors by email, telephone, or other available technology rather than face-to-face.

Gatherings

- Changes to gatherings, including size, locations, etc. will be communicated as they occur.

Lunch and Breaks

- Wash your hands thoroughly before and after eating.
- Eating alone or outside with friends or colleagues while socially distanced is encouraged.
- Use disposable kitchenware (e.g., forks, plates) whenever possible.
- Common areas with refrigerators, coffee machines, microwaves, etc. will not be available for the time being.

Visitors

Visitors and invited guests (e.g., contractors) are allowed at Florida Poly facilities only with explicit permission and are expected to abide by all University-wide and building-specific protocols.

Conclusion

Our commitment to minimizing the spread of the virus starts with the well-being of our dedicated faculty and staff. Florida Poly's employees are the backbone of our academic and economic mission.

Helping to keep Florida Poly healthy will take hard work from each one of us. If every member of the University community seriously embraces the responsibility they have to themselves and to one another, we can continue working to meet our goals together.

The plan detailed here has been designed with employee needs and opinions in mind and incorporates best practices and guidance from state and federal health officials. It's important to remember that as our understanding of COVID-19 evolves and changes, this plan may also change. We will work hard to communicate changes as they occur and to implement them in a clear, deliberate fashion.

We appreciate the flexibility and teamwork each of our employees has exhibited as we responded to the coronavirus throughout the spring and summer. You have risen to meet unprecedented challenges. As we navigate this pandemic together, Florida Poly is proud to have this strong, compassionate, committed team by our side.

Links to Additional Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guidelines

<https://www.cdc.gov/>

Federal Government Reopening Guidelines

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/>

CDC Self-Checker

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

Florida Department of Health

<https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/>

Florida Polytechnic University updates and response to COVID-19

<https://floridapoly.edu/movingforward/>

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