



Office of the President

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May 28, 2020

To: UWSA colleagues

CC: UW System Emergency Operation Center

Fr: UW System President Ray Cross

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ray Cross'.

Re: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Here are the latest updates to share regarding the UW System's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Returning to the Physical Buildings – What to Expect

Over the next few days, weeks and months, some employees may be returning to their onsite work locations for various reasons. Others may continue to work from home. At this time please remember that employees should not come to the buildings until they are informed by their supervisor to do so.

As we enter this next phase, employees also need to be aware that the onsite workplace will likely look and feel different than it did when we were last in the office.

A more detailed plan for returning to the buildings will be coming soon. We are making space, services, and personal hygiene updates in the following areas to ensure your safety:

- Social Distancing (6-foot rule)
- Face Coverings
- Increased Sanitization
- Signage
- Communication

Social Distancing

Social distancing and maintaining 6 feet of separation from others may be challenging at times and it requires everyone's cooperation. The goal is to maintain at least 6 feet of physical separation at all times. In order to accomplish this, solutions may differ from building to building. However, you may notice the following:

- Reminder signage to keep 6 feet of separation
- Conference rooms may be decommissioned or reconfigured. Small rooms may be limited to single occupancy and chairs may be removed from large meeting rooms or workstations to ease compliance
- Work practices may be modified
- Organized foot traffic will be considered

When 6 feet is not possible, we must all do the best we can to use common sense and minimize contact – this includes wearing a face covering.

Face Coverings

Face coverings are considered a 'source control' to help prevent the spread of germs to others. By expecting all employees and visitors to wear a face covering, we are fostering our commitment to protect and care for one another.

Below are types of face coverings and masks and their intended use. Cloth face coverings and disposable masks are the types that should be worn for employees with a low exposure.

Type and Intended Use of Face Coverings/Masks				
Type	Cloth Face Covering 	Disposable Mask 	Medical-Grade Surgical Mask 	N95 Respirator 
Description	Home-made or commercially manufactured face coverings that are washable and help contain wearer's respiratory emissions	Commercially manufactured masks that help contain wearer's respiratory emissions	FDA-approved masks to protect the wearer from large droplets and splashes; helps contain wearer's respiratory emissions	Provide effective respiratory protection from airborne particles and aerosols; helps contain wearer's respiratory emissions
Intended use	Recommended for use in non-healthcare settings (office spaces and community areas) where 6' social distancing cannot be consistently maintained. Must be replaced daily. (While likely necessary for ingress and egress, not required when working alone in an office).		These masks are reserved for healthcare workers and other approved task-specific hazards.	

Increased Sanitization

We will be implementing heightened cleaning measures to ensure the health and wellbeing of our employees. In addition to regular professional cleanings, sanitation products will be provided for employees to use in their own spaces.

Signage

Friendly reminders to employees and guests will be placed around the building. The well-being of our community depends on all of us doing our part.

Communication

We will continue to share timely, accurate and pertinent information to engage our employees and to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. More detailed information will be forthcoming.

Again, please remember that because this is a fluid situation, it is likely things will change with regards to your work situation. When or if that happens, we will let you know as quickly as possible.

UW-Shared Services Layoffs

Today, we are announcing difficult decisions to lay off approximately 40 filled positions for employees in UW-Shared Services. Unfortunately, these decisions are necessary to help us align our resources as we unwind from restructuring, and are made even more critical due to significant financial challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We will be working with the affected employees during this transition period. We do not anticipate additional layoffs at this time.

Cyber Crime Alert

Finally, Michigan State University is reportedly impacted by a ransomware attack. The attacker claims to have stolen files, including student's personal information, and is threatening to publish the information if a bounty is not paid. The attacker published screen shots, to their blog, that appear to show personal folders on university file server. The attacker's blog post states that the data will be published in approximately a week's time if the ransom is not paid.

It is unclear how the attack occurred, but phishing emails, which lead to compromised credentials, are suspected. It is imperative that all exercise caution when clicking on links in messages or entering a username/password into a website. Rather than following the link, please go to the login page that you typically use to access online university resources.

In closing, please continue to check our [COVID-19 website](#) for updates, and use our tool for UW System and UWSA employees to ask questions about coronavirus-specific topics, which can be accessed on the [FAQ webpage](#) (campus credentials log-in required).

Thank you for your continued hard work during this very challenging time. Be safe, be kind, and stay engaged.