

# Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19

Updated July 2020

*Thank you for hosting a Rollins College Student in the coming semester. This information was compiled for you based on federal guidelines, best practices, and current Rollins College policies and procedures.*

Rollins College is encouraging host organizations to offer remote work options for students whenever possible. However, for those positions or opportunities that require on-site work, the college is requiring organizations to follow safety measures as detailed by the **U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)** and the **Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**. For the safety of employers, students, and customers, Rollins College is requiring employers to put in place and verify proper protective measures for those Rollins students who will come in contact with other workers and clients.

## Basic Infection Prevention Measures

For most organizations, protecting student participants will require emphasizing basic infection prevention measures. As appropriate, all organizations should implement good hygiene and infection control practices:

- We encourage all organizations to provide appropriate **personal protective equipment (PPE)** to all students participating in opportunities.
  - As per the U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration, employers are obligated to provide their workers with PPE needed to keep them safe while performing their jobs. The types of PPE required during the COVID-19 outbreak should be based on the risk of exposure while working and performing job tasks.
- Promote frequent and thorough hand washing, including by providing workers, customers, and worksite visitors with a place to wash their hands. If soap and running water are not immediately available, provide alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Encourage workers, including Rollins students, to stay home if they are sick.
- Encourage respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes. Provide customers and the public with tissues and trash receptacles.
- Employers should explore whether they can establish policies and practices, such as flexible worksites (e.g., telecommuting) and flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts), to increase the physical distance among employees and between employees and others if state and local health authorities recommend the use of social distancing strategies.
- Discourage workers from using other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible.
- Maintain regular housekeeping practices, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, equipment, and other elements of the work environment. Consider posting handwashing/hygiene signs.

## Classify Worker Exposure

Risk of occupational exposure to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, may vary dependent upon the industry type, need for contact within 6 feet of people known to be, or suspected of being, infected with SARS-CoV-2, or requirement for repeated or extended contact with persons known to be, or suspected of being, infected with SARS-CoV-2.

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To help employers determine appropriate precautions, OSHA has divided job tasks into four risk exposure levels: very high, high, medium, and lower risk. Most American workers will likely fall in the medium to lower exposure risk levels. Complete descriptions can be found at:

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

## Procedural Changes: What to Do to Protect Workers

Medium exposure risk jobs include those that require frequent and/or close contact with (i.e., within 6 feet of) people who may be infected with SARS-CoV-2, but who are not known or suspected COVID-19 patients. In workplaces where participants have medium exposure risk, organizations should implement the following:

### Engineering Controls

- Please review the OSHA guidelines on Engineering Controls. These are used to reduce exposure without relying on worker behavior. This may include:
  - Installing physical barriers, such as clear plastic sneeze guards, where feasible.
  - Increasing ventilation in the work environment.

### Administrative Controls

- Please review the OSHA guidelines on Administrative Controls. These are changes in work policy and procedure to reduce or minimize exposure to a hazard. These may include:
  - Developing emergency communication plans, including a forum to answer questions and concerns from workers. Be sure to include student participants in these communications.
  - Keeping customers informed about symptoms of COVID-19 and ask sick customers to minimize contact with workers until healthy again. Consider requiring all customers and visitors to wear masks, regardless of whether they are showing symptoms.
  - Where appropriate, limiting customers' and the public's access to the worksite, or restrict access to only certain workplace areas.
  - Considering strategies to minimize face-to-face contact (e.g., drive through windows, phone-based communication, telework).
  - Reconsidering or discontinuing any non-essential travel plans.

### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

When selecting PPE, consider factors such as function, fit, decontamination ability, disposal, and cost. Sometimes, when PPE will have to be used repeatedly for a long period of time, a more expensive and durable type of PPE may be less expensive overall than disposable PPE.

Each employer should select the combination of PPE that protects workers specific to their workplace. Workers with medium exposure risk may need to wear some combination of gloves, a gown, a face mask, and/or a face shield or goggles. PPE ensembles for workers in the medium exposure risk category will vary by work task, the results of the employer's hazard assessment, and the types of exposures workers have on the job.

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## Recommendations for Those Who Become Ill

The CDC recommends those who think they may have COVID-19 stay at home and away from other people. Staying away from others helps stop the spread of COVID-19. If a person is experiencing emergency warning signs, including trouble breathing, they should seek emergency medical care immediately.

In addition to self-isolation, the CDC recommends that any person experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 illness not return to community environments for a minimum of three days with no fever and improved respiratory symptoms, such as cough or shortness of breath, and a minimum of ten days since the first appearance of symptoms. Full details of CDC recommendations can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/>.

## Student Support Considerations

We ask that any organization hosting a Rollins College student help those students understand their role within the organization. This may include:

- Helping students understand their right to sick time or paid time off, depending on their role as an employee or a volunteer in the organization.
- Speaking to any student participant early and often regarding contingency plans and potential closures, as this may affect required hours the student needs to complete.
  - Discuss how contracted, such as internship hours, can be fulfilled in a worst-case scenario.
  - Make plans now for optional remote work, consider what projects can be done remotely and what materials students may need in to order to work.
- Including student participants on internal centralized employee communications so that they are connected to things like phone and texting trees.
- Encouraging students to communicate actively with their Rollins College representative about changes.

**Sources:** U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration - <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>; The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - <https://www.cdc.gov/>; Rollins College Coronavirus FAQs - <https://www.rollins.edu/covid/frequently-asked-questions/>