

May 15, 2020

Dear Iowa State faculty and staff,

I want to share an update on the university's phased approach to increase operations this summer in preparation for fall. **The vast majority of faculty and staff who are working remotely will not return to their normal work locations on June 1.**

The health and safety of the Iowa State community is our top priority, and we recognize that departments and units perform diverse work in diverse workspaces. Therefore, decisions about safely increasing work at normal locations must include local expertise.

For phase one, administrative officers will identify supervisors (or designees) to develop plans for their workspaces. **Select supervisors (or designees) and a limited number of their staff who are currently working remotely will be asked to return to their normal locations, on or after June 1,** to develop and oversee the implementation of these plans. In addition, Facilities Planning and Management will be creating standards for building common spaces, which will help building supervisors in this part of plan development.

**During this planning phase, other faculty and staff who have been working remotely should continue to do so.** You are still allowed to go to your normal work locations while practicing social/physical distancing and appropriate hygiene and cleaning practices to perform necessary job functions that you cannot do at home.

The development of workspace plans will require the following activities:

- Assessing workspace capacity to support social/physical distancing.
- Determining what, if any, common spaces will be made available (e.g., break rooms, conference rooms) while adhering to social/physical distancing.
- Determining expectations for keeping commonly used surfaces and spaces clean (e.g., copiers, printers, desks, tables), which must be done in addition to Facilities Planning and Management's regular cleaning.
- Assessing needs to support personal hygiene (e.g., soap, hand sanitizer)
- Determining what physical barriers, visual cues, and/or signage are needed to support increased distance between individuals.
- Determining schedules and staffing levels to safely support necessary in-person work or services and adhere to social/physical distancing.
- Working with other supervisors to determine schedules for the use of workspaces shared across departments or units.

- Scheduling time for Facilities Planning and Management to perform necessary activities such as restoring ventilation systems to normal operation and flushing pipes.
- Considering other factors like air circulation and office visitors.
- Considering additional mitigation tools specific to each workspace.

A toolkit for developing workspace plans will be provided next week. Shortly thereafter, faculty, staff, and graduate students engaged in research will receive additional guidance for projects and laboratories.

We have received many questions about face coverings. Beginning June 1, all faculty and staff who are able are expected to wear a face covering or face shield when in the presence of others where other mitigation strategies are not available or are difficult to maintain (e.g., social/physical distancing). The university is working to provide face coverings to faculty and staff who need them, and more information will be provided soon. Prior to June 1, faculty and staff are encouraged to wear face coverings if they have them.

We also recognize that some employees are more vulnerable to serious illness caused by COVID-19 because they meet the [high-risk criteria](#) or they live with or support someone who is high risk. If an employee is asked to return to their normal work location and has concerns, they should contact Andrea Little with Employee & Labor Relations, University Human Resources at [alittle@iastate.edu](mailto:alittle@iastate.edu) to consider appropriate options.

Any employee who is sick or [experiencing symptoms](#) should stay home and notify their supervisor.

Many employees have been working on campus throughout the pandemic to maintain critical university operations. I want to thank these employees for their ongoing efforts to support infection control through physical distancing, wearing face coverings as needed, keeping workspaces clean, practicing proper personal hygiene, and monitoring their health. Our frontline employees have shown that diligent practice of these strategies is critical to help mitigate the risk of COVID-19.

Please continue to monitor your university email for updates on summer and fall planning. Important information will be shared through these university communications and on the [COVID-19 safety page](#). Please continue to send your Human Resources-related questions to [hr\\_delivery@iastate.edu](mailto:hr_delivery@iastate.edu) and email all other questions to [COVID-19@iastate.edu](mailto:COVID-19@iastate.edu).

Thank you for your patience, flexibility, and care as we continue to work through this ever-changing situation.

Sincerely,

Wendy Wintersteen  
President