

COVID-19 Preparedness Plan



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Introduction

Emergency Executive Order 20-74, issued by Gov. Tim Walz, requires each business in operation during the peacetime emergency to establish a “COVID-19 Preparedness Plan.”

The university’s COVID-19 Preparedness Plan follows guidance developed by the state of Minnesota, which is based upon Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines for COVID-19, Minnesota Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MNOSHA) statutes, rules and standards, and Minnesota’s relevant and current executive orders. It addresses:

- prompt identification and isolation of sick persons;
- social distancing – workers must be at least six-feet apart;
- worker hygiene and source controls;
- workplace building and ventilation protocol;
- workplace cleaning and disinfection protocol; and
- communications and training practices and protocol.

The university has reviewed and incorporated the applicable guidances provided by the state of Minnesota for the development of this plan, including the following industry guidance: Centers for Disease Controls guidances for institutions of higher education and Minnesota Department of Health guidance for institutions of higher education.

This plan is subject to change as more information is learned about the COVID-19 pandemic and updated guidance is received from federal and state authorities, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Office of the Governor.

Plan Development and Oversight

The university is committed to providing as safe and as healthy a workplace and campus as is possible for its faculty and staff. To ensure that, the university has developed the following Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Everyone at the university is responsible for implementing this plan. The university's goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 on all of its campuses. That requires full cooperation among all employees. Only through this cooperative effort can establish and maintain the safety and health of its faculty, staff, and students, and do its part to preserve the well-being of the university community

The COVID-19 Preparedness Plan is administered by Ben Murray, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, who maintains the overall authority and responsibility for the plan. However, supervisors and employees are equally responsible for supporting, implementing, complying with and providing recommendations to further improve all aspects of this COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. The university's supervisors have its full support in enforcing the provisions of this plan. Employees should familiarize themselves with all aspects of this plan, and work with their colleagues to make certain it is implemented appropriately within their work area.

This plan has been developed with the advice and counsel of the Pandemic Assessment and Coordinating Team and the Fall 2020 COVID-19 Coordinate Group.

The university is serious about safety and health; keeping its employees working at the university remains a priority, and that requires a safe working environment. In response to the pandemic, the university has communicated with great transparency to all employees, frequently providing updates to address questions, concerns, and procedures, as well as to share information on COVID-19 related issues and resolutions. The President's Cabinet will continue to address ongoing issues and concerns at hand, with a promise to continue to communicate as appropriate and necessary.

Prompt identification and isolation of sick persons

The university has informed employees about, and encouraged them to self-monitor for, signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The following policies and procedures have been implemented to assess employees' health status prior to entering the workplace and for employees to report when they are sick, experiencing symptoms and/or have been exposed to COVID-19.

Self-Screening

Prior to the university making a decision to return employees to its campuses for work, every employee will be required to conduct a daily self-screening. Each day before coming to work, employees should ascertain if they are displaying any possible symptoms associated with COVID-19, including:

- Fever or 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
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea.

A sample COVID-10 self-screening questionnaire is available on the Human Resources section of Blackboard. Additionally, employees may use either of these online self-screening tools:

- [Mayo Clinic COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#)
- [Google COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#)

Employees must be free of ANY symptoms potentially related to COVID-19 or have had evaluation and clearance by a healthcare provider to be eligible to report to work.

The university has established leave policies that promote employees staying at home when they are sick, when household members are sick, or when required by a health care provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household. Employees are advised to reach out to Human Resources for information specific to their entitlements under the university's sick leave policies, vacation policies, and/or the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

According to the CDC, individuals with certain conditions may have a higher risk of COVID-19 infection. Those conditions may include:

- Older adults (ages 65 and older)
- Immunocompromised
- Asthma (moderate to severe)
- HIV
- Liver disease
- Chronic lung disease
- Diabetes
- Hemoglobin disorders
- Serious heart conditions
- Chronic kidney disease being treated with dialysis
- Severe obesity

If an employee has a health condition that falls within one of the CDC high-risk categories, is pregnant, or has childcare issues, the employee may seek a temporary COVID-19 workplace adjustment by contacting Human Resources at hr@smumn.edu, 507-457-1508, or by completing the [COVID-19 Return-to-Campus Accommodation Request Form](#).

Reporting Symptoms or Exposure

Employees are required to take the following actions if they experience symptoms or are exposed to COVID-19:

1. An employee experiencing symptoms prior to reporting to work should:
 - Stay home.
 - Notify Human Resources of the type and onset of symptoms.
 - Contact his/her medical provider for guidance and follow-up with the supervisor regarding workability status.
2. An employee experiencing symptoms while at the university should:
 - Notify his/her supervisor* of the type and onset of symptoms.
 - Go home as soon as possible, wear a mask/face covering and isolate from others until leaving campus.
 - Contact his/her medical provider for guidance and follow-up with the supervisor regarding workability status.
3. If an employee or member of an employee's household has been notified of potential exposure, the employee must notify Human Resources, self-monitor and follow the instructions provided upon notification.

4. If a member of an employee's household has COVID-19 symptoms, the employee must stay home and self-monitor until the family member has been evaluated by a medical provider and given further guidance regarding the symptoms. The employee is expected to keep his/her supervisor informed of the status.

For information on quarantine and isolation, visit: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine-isolation.html

*The supervisor must notify Human Resources of the information received as soon as possible.

Human Resources is responsible for defining the appropriate mitigation actions and disseminating communications to the impacted employees directly or through their supervisor. The university will protect the privacy of its employees' status and health information. As required, the university will only share protected private health information as required by applicable governmental agencies – for example a county health department.

Reporting Testing Positive for Covid-19

Employees are required to take the following actions if they test positive for COVID-19:

1. Stay home per guidance from his/her medical provider and until meeting the following CDC clearance criteria:
 - no fever for 72 hours off medication
 - a minimum of 10 days since symptoms first appeared or tested positive
 - improvement in overall symptoms

See: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html.

2. Notify Human Resources.

Social Distancing

Social distancing disciplines have been established as the highest priority associated with this Preparedness Plan. This aspect of the plan cannot be compromised. If compromised to any degree, the President's Cabinet will direct additional mandatory precautions as necessary. Failure to comply with defined social distancing expectations by any employee may result in consequences, up to and including termination if non-compliance is willfully repeated. Social distancing will be defined in the workplace through the following engineering and administrative controls:

- The university will make temporary changes in workspaces to allow for proper social distancing.
- Employees are directed to maintain proper social distancing of at least six feet as practicable.
- Signage has been posted at appropriate locations concerning social distancing requirements to which employees must adhere.
- The number and spacing of employees in each office will vary based on the ability to implement social distancing in workspaces.
- Physical distancing markers will be consistent in professional design and applied as appropriate. Distancing markers will be applied, at a minimum, in common areas like Cardinal Central, Student Central, the Dining Hall, the Gostomski Fieldhouse, etc.
- Employees are prohibited from gathering in groups unless social distancing can be maintained.
- Elevator usage is restricted to two people at any time.
- Employees should not use other employees' personal protective equipment, phones, computer equipment, desks, cubicles, workstations, offices or other personal work tools and equipment.
- Certain employees may travel between campuses for necessary critical work responsibilities and for in-person meetings that are an absolute necessity.
- Occupancy for conference rooms, auditoriums, etc., will be limited to ensure social distancing. Signage will indicate the maximum number of occupants per space.
- Visits by external guests to a campus are prohibited unless the visit is necessary to conduct specific work.

Faculty and staff at work on-site must follow these social distancing practices:

- Stay at least 6 feet (about two arm's length) from other people at all times.
- Use virtual meetings whenever practical or possible.
- Avoid crowded places and mass gatherings.

Where feasible, meetings should be held in whole or part using the extensive range of available collaboration tools (e.g. Zoom, Google Meet and Hangouts, telephone, etc.). In-person meetings may be limited to the restrictions of local, state, and federal orders and should not exceed 50% of a room's capacity, assuming individuals can still maintain 6 feet of separation for social distancing requirements. Departments should remove or rearrange chairs and tables or add visual cues in meeting rooms to support social distancing practices between attendees. All attendees should wear a mask or face covering while sharing space in a common room.

In addition to strict adherence to the defined social distancing guidelines and engineering defined above, protective Plexiglas shields will be installed as appropriate and will remain in place indefinitely.

The university will post a variety of directional signs and decals relating to social distancing and other COVID-19 safety precautions. Signage will be posted at entrances to and exits from buildings, in restrooms, and common areas. The university will also use its digital signage capabilities to share information about COVID-19 safety precautions. Bulletin boards will also be used for posting of signage. Employees are expected to comply the directional signage and decals.

Furniture settings in all buildings will be reviewed and adjusted to support social distancing.

Alternative formats for student activities will be developed to address the need for social distancing.

Further information on social distancing may be found here: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html

www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/materials/socdistwork.pdf

Worker hygiene and source controls

Basic infection prevention measures have been implemented at the university's campuses. Employees have been instructed to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially at the beginning and end of work, prior to any mealtimes and after using the restroom. Further, employees are instructed to wash their hands if/when there are business needs to share workspace or when handling shared documents, etc. If it is not possible to wash their hands, employees are instructed to apply hand sanitizer from provided dispensers (that contain at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol) as often as practicable.

Hand-sanitizer dispensers are at entrances and locations in the workplace so they can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled.

Additional guidance may be found at the following links:

www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html

www.cdc.gov/handwashing

<https://youtu.be/d914EnpU4Fo>

Face Masks or Face Coverings

Face masks will be provided for all employees. Employees must wear a face mask or face covering at all times when at work, except when the employee is in his/her office alone or when the employee is walking outside alone.

Emergency Executive Order 20-81, issued by Governor Tim Walz on July 22, 2020. Provides as follows: "Minnesotans must wear a face covering in indoor businesses and indoor public settings.... Workers must also wear face coverings outdoors when it is not possible to maintain

social distancing.” Individuals who have a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that makes it unreasonable for the individual to wear a face covering are exempted from this requirement. Face coverings may be temporarily removed under the following circumstances:

- When an individual is alone, including when alone in an office, a room, a cubicle with walls that are higher than face level when social distancing is maintained. In such situations, the individual should still carry a face covering to be prepared for person-to-person interactions and to be used when no longer alone
- When exercising in an indoor business such as a gym or fitness center when the level of exertion makes it difficult to wear a face covering, provided social distancing is always maintained.
- During practices or performances in an indoor business or indoor public space when a face covering cannot be used while playing a musical instrument, provided that social distancing is always maintained.
- When eating or drinking in an indoor business or indoor public space, provided that at least 6 feet of physical distance is maintained between persons who are not members of the same party.
- While communicating with an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing or has a disability, medical condition, or mental health condition that makes communication with that individual while wearing a face covering difficult, provided that social distancing is maintained to the extent possible between persons who are not members of the same household.

Students and staff in higher education institutions must comply with the requirements of the Executive Order, except that students and faculty are permitted to wear face shields as an alternative to face coverings in the following situations:

- When faculty are teaching a class or giving a lecture, or when students are participating in classroom activities, where it is important for the face to be seen (for example, certain activities in language or communications classes).
- Where a face covering may pose a hazard due to the nature of the class or activity (for example, in a laboratory component of a class).
- When staff or faculty are providing direct support student services and a face covering impedes the service being provided.

All employees are required to maintain and clean their mask per CDC recommendations. For information on design, use, removal and cleaning of face coverings, visit:

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html.

Personal Protective Supplies

If there is a need for more personal protective supplies, additional office cleaning, etc., supervisors should contact James Bedtke, Vice President for Facilities, who has the responsibility for coordination with maintenance and custodial staff. These items would include:

- Distancing markers for deployment in lines, waiting areas, conference rooms, and frequented desks, etc.
- Sanitizer dispensers for all location entrances
- Signage for all location entrances
- Cleaning and disinfectant supplies
- Face masks
- Plexiglas shields.

Respiratory Etiquette

Employees have been instructed to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or cough into their elbow when coughing or sneezing, and to avoid touching their face, in particular their mouth, nose and eyes, with their hands.

Employees should dispose of tissues in the trash and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward. Respiratory etiquette will be demonstrated on posters and supported by making tissues, trash receptacles, and hand sanitizer available to all employees and visitors. Respiratory etiquette posters will be displayed at appropriate locations throughout the campuses.

Additional guidance may be found at the following links:

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html

www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing_sneezing.html

Visitors

All visitors and vendors accessing any university property must comply with all university expectations for masks, face coverings, social distancing, etc. Visits are restricted to prospective students, prospective employees, and others approved for legitimate university business. Visitor and vendors must report to the following offices upon arrival to and departure from campus:

- Campus Safety - Winona Campus
- La Salle Hall Front Desk - Minneapolis campus
- Front Desk - Rochester campus.

Visitors are restricted to the areas on campus necessary for the purpose of their visit.

Workplace building and ventilation protocol

Operation of the buildings in which the workplaces are located, including necessary sanitation, assessment and maintenance of building systems, (water, plumbing, electrical, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems are being assessed. The maximum amount of fresh air is being brought into the workplace, air recirculation is being limited, and ventilation systems are being properly used and maintained.

Workplace cleaning and disinfection protocol

Regular housekeeping practices are being implemented, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of work surfaces, equipment, and areas in the work environment, including restrooms, break rooms, lunch rooms and meeting rooms. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting will be conducted in high-touch areas, such as phones, keyboards, touch screens, controls, door handles, elevator panels, railings, copy machines, etc. A specific cleaning plan and checklist will be created for each campus. This plan will be shared with all custodial personnel with cleaning expectations defined (frequency, defined areas of focus, high-touch priorities, use of materials) going forward.

Appropriate and effective cleaning and disinfecting supplies have been purchased and are available for use in accordance with product labels, safety data sheets and manufacturer specifications, and are being used with required personal protective equipment for the product.

Communications and Training

This Preparedness Plan will be communicated to all workers by email. Supervisors will monitor how effectively the program has been implemented by maintaining open communication with employees and providing additional resources as requested/needed to ensure a safe work environment. Input from supervisors to their appropriate direct report on the President's Cabinet will be encouraged and welcomed. This Preparedness Plan will be posted to the university's Blackboard site as "COVID-19 Preparedness Plan." It will be modified as conditions evolve, and changes will be communicated as updated.

Before returning to work, faculty and staff must complete a training module on COVID-19 addressing the spread and symptoms of the virus and its prevention. The training will be available on the Human Resources section of Blackboard.

The university will open for employees, students, and visitors with legitimate university business purposes on August 17, 2020. No external groups or events will be permitted on any university campus through December 31, 2020.

Academic and Residence Life

The university welcomed students to its Winona campus for in-person instruction and on-campus experiences in August 2020 with accommodations to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and promote the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff. See the [full academic calendar](#) for fall.

A hybrid approach, allowing in-person instruction for certain programs and online learning for others, is planned for the Twin Cities and Rochester campuses. The Twin Cities Campus has a

slightly altered approach since many of the campus buildings do not support the prescribed social distancing.

- All students have been asked to observe social distancing of at least 6 feet when feasible.
- Masks or face coverings are required for common areas, classrooms, and in-person engagements.
- Certain courses will be online or in blended formats to support social distancing.
- Faculty will have alternatives to support students who may become ill.
- Enhanced cleaning will be implemented for all facilities.
- Co-curricular activities will be delivered in various formats.
- Students will be strongly encouraged to stay on campus for the entire term, and students will not be allowed to move on campus after the move-in date.
- No overnight external visitors will be allowed.
- Food service delivery will be modified and may include multiple service locations and pre-packaged meals, dependent on the assessed risk for contagion.
- Quarantine procedures will be established and implemented.
- The university is working in conjunction with Mayo Clinic on COVID-19 testing for its students.

The university is committed to the health and safety of the entire university community. These are stressful and unique times. Please be kind to one another while also doing what is best for the common good.

Together, we are stronger. Together, we will be steadfast and resilient. Together, we are Saint Mary's.