

# COVID-19 RETURN TO WORKPLACE GUIDE

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## GUIDING PRINCIPLE

**York Technical College takes the safety of employees and students in our campus community seriously, and to that end, we are implementing a flexible and phased approach to returning employees to the workplace and resuming campus operations. The phased plan includes short-term and long-term planning on returning employees to campus and normal operations.**

York Technical College's (YTC) procedures, guidelines and protocols for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic will be rooted in a "people first" principle with safety for our faculty, staff and students and for the public in which we interact at the forefront of our planning.

The primary goals for YTC's response to the COVID-19 pandemic are to protect public health and continue the institution's vital mission to provide citizens of our service area with opportunities for educational and workforce development.

YTC's plans will also be aligned and consistent with local orders and ordinances of the State of South Carolina's Phased Re-entry Model. Plans will also follow recommendations from the federal government (Opening Guidelines), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), South

Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC), and the College's Crisis Management Team (CMT).

YTC has undertaken reasonable steps to lessen the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in connection with college operations. York Technical College is not responsible for any risks related to COVID-19 in connection with College operations and services.

This plan does not cover all aspects of business operations, instruction, student services, leave, Child Development Center, etc. Additional procedures, guidelines, and protocols will be developed as necessary.

Our knowledge and understanding of the COVID-19 virus continues to evolve, and our procedures, guidelines, and protocols will be updated as more information becomes available.

# WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES

All employees are expected to fully comply with the procedures, protocols and guidelines outlined in this document as part of YTC's Workplace Expectations and Guidelines.

## Symptom Monitoring Requirement

Employees who have been advised to return to the workplace must conduct symptom self-monitoring every day before reporting to work. All employees will be expected to complete an online self-check prior to returning to work and daily thereafter.

If, at any time, you are sick or have symptoms of COVID-19, stay home, notify your immediate supervisor and Human Resources, and do not report to work until symptoms resolve. You must be free of ANY symptoms potentially related to COVID-19 to be eligible to report to work.

Symptoms of COVID-19 can include one or more of the following:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New GI symptoms
- New loss of taste or smell

This list does not include all possible symptoms. Refer to the CDC website for the latest developments of the virus.

According to the CDC, special populations or individuals with certain health conditions may have a higher risk for COVID-19 infection. Those may include:

- Older adults (age 65 years and older)
- Pregnancy
- People with HIV
- Asthma (moderate-to-severe)
- Chronic lung disease
- Diabetes

- Serious heart conditions
- Chronic kidney disease being treated with dialysis
- Severe obesity
- Being immunocompromised

Employees who have been advised to return to the workplace and have concerns about doing so due to a medical condition that places them in a higher risk group or those who wish to seek reasonable accommodations based on the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act related to returning to campus should contact Human Resources at 803-327-8009 or [hr@yorktech.edu](mailto:hr@yorktech.edu) and their immediate supervisor.

## Exposure To or Having a Confirmed Positive COVID-19

If you have a confirmed positive COVID-19 test, employee must not come to the workplace until 14 days have passed since their symptoms began AND they are free of fever (100° F or greater using a thermometer) for three days without the use of fever-reducing medicines AND their other symptoms have improved.

If you have been in close contact with someone who has a confirmed positive COVID-19 case, employee must not come to the workplace until 14 days have passed since the date of last contact with the individual with the confirmed positive test.

If you have been in close contact with a YTC employee who has a confirmed positive COVID-19 case, employee must not come to the workplace until 14 days have passed since the date of last contact with the individual with the confirmed positive test. Office of Human Resources will provide notification to potentially exposed employee(s).

# PHASED RETURN

York Technical College, with guidance from the South Carolina Department of Administration, will phase a return of employees over time in a coordinated process to ensure appropriate cleaning and sanitizing has been performed, plexiglass barriers have been installed, social distancing markers have been placed, and sufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) has been secured. Employees will be provided with a minimum of seven days notice when they are expected to return to work.

YTC will assess workplace staffing needs based on mission-critical operations, ability to control and manage specific work environments, and necessity to access on-site resources. These decisions, once approved, will be communicated to the campus community and through your respective Associate Dean, Dean, Associate Vice President, Vice President, or Executive Committee member.

The tentative phasing plan for York Technical College is as follows:

## ***Phase I: Beginning June 1, 2020***

Essential employees needed to provide priority in-person labs starting June 15 will return to work during this phase. Face masks will be required of all persons on-campus. The campus will be closed to the general public.

## ***Phase II: Beginning no later than July 1, 2020***

Essential employees needed to provide priority in-person instruction and select support services for the remaining summer sessions will return to work during this phase. Face masks will be required of all persons on-campus. The campus will be closed to the general public.

## ***Phase III: Beginning no later than August 3, 2020***

Essential employees needed to provide priority in-person instruction and select support services for the remaining summer classes and to prepare for fall term will return to work this phase. The College may open to the public depending on the virus containment. Face masks will be required of all persons on-campus.

## ***Phase IV: Beginning August 24, 2020***

Most employees will have returned to workplace, with possible modified scheduling, dependent on the College returning to normal operations. Face masks will be required of all persons on-campus.

Each employee will receive an official communication from their supervisor and/or Office of Human Resources regarding the date they are expected to return to work.

Workplace staffing will be carefully monitored, controlled, and coordinated to mitigate potential risks. The phased plan may be modified dependent on virus containment and guidance from CDC, SC DHEC, and SC Department of Administration.

The need to minimize the number of people on campus to meet social distancing requirements will continue for some time. Support units that can continue to effectively work remotely will likely continue to do so until restrictions are eased for larger gatherings.

No unit or department should increase staffing levels beyond current needs to support critical on-site operations without approval from your respective Associate Dean, Dean, Associate Vice President, Vice President, or Executive Committee member.

Once decisions to expand on-site staffing in certain areas have been made, employees should follow the policies and protocols detailed in this guide for returning to work on campus.

As staffing on-site increases and operations expand, CMT will closely monitor and assess the potential spread of the virus, as well as existing policies and procedures to mitigate it.

# STAFFING OPTIONS

Once employees have been notified to return to work on-site, there are several options departments should consider to maintain required social distancing measures and reduce population density within buildings and work spaces.



## Remote Work

Those who can work remotely to fulfill some or all of their work responsibilities may request approval from a supervisor to continue to do so to reduce the number of individuals on campus and the potential spread of the COVID-19 virus. These arrangements, if approved by the immediate supervisor, can be done on a full or partial day/week schedule as appropriate.

## Alternating Days

In order to limit the number of individuals and interactions among those on campus, departments should schedule partial staffing on alternating days. Such schedules will help enable social distancing, especially in areas with large common workspaces.



## Staggered Reporting/Departing

The beginning and end of the workday typically bring many people together at common entry/exit points of buildings. Staggering reporting and departure times by at least 30 minutes will reduce traffic in common areas to meet social distancing requirements. (See Enter/Exit Controls for further details.)

# PERSONAL SAFETY PRACTICES

**Face masks / Face Coverings:** Face masks or face coverings must be worn by all faculty and staff working on campus when in the presence of others and in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., common work spaces, meeting rooms, classrooms, etc.). Appropriate use of face masks or coverings is critical in minimizing risks to others near you. You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick. The mask or cloth face covering is not a substitute for social distancing.

Cloth face coverings must only be worn for one day at a time and must be properly cleaned before use again. Each faculty and staff member will be provided with two (2) reusable face coverings by the College. These face coverings will be distributed by Facilities Management to pick up stations located throughout the campus. These stations will be unmanned and will contain a dispenser with pre-packaged masks to avoid contamination. Masks will be available to any individual entering the buildings including students, faculty/staff, vendors and visitors. Instructions for wearing the masks along with other items (to be determined) will be in the package.

Face masks will be required of all persons on-campus.

**Handwashing:** Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, or touching your face. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

**Hand Sanitizing:** If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth, and wash your hands after touching your face. Hand sanitizing stations are located at building entrances, throughout building corridors, classrooms, and other high traffic areas.

**Gloves:** Healthcare workers and others in high-risk areas should use gloves as part of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), but according to the CDC, gloves are not necessary for general use and do not replace

good hand hygiene. Washing your hands often is considered the best practice for common everyday tasks.

**Social Distancing:** People without symptoms may be able to spread virus. Stay at least six feet (6 ft., about 2 arms length) from other people. Do not gather in groups. Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings.

**Goggles/Face Shields:** Employees do not need to wear goggles or face shields as part of general activity on campus. Good hand hygiene and avoiding touching your face are generally sufficient for non-healthcare environments. Face shields will be available to faculty upon request to aid in safe classroom instruction.

**Personal Disinfection:** While custodial crews will continue to clean office and work spaces based on CDC guidelines, additional care should be taken to wipe down commonly used surfaces. Before starting work and before you leave any room in which you have been working, you must wipe down all work areas with disinfectant solution (provided by Facilities Management). This includes any shared-space location or equipment (e.g. copiers, printers, computers, A/V and other electrical equipment, coffee makers, desks and tables, light switches, door knobs, etc.). If replacement sanitation supplies are needed, please contact Facilities Management at 803-981-7282 or [facilitiesmanagement@yorktech.edu](mailto:facilitiesmanagement@yorktech.edu).

**Coughing/Sneezing Hygiene:** If you are in a private setting and do not have on your cloth face covering, remember to always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow. Then throw 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, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



## GUIDANCE FOR SPECIFIC WORKPLACE SCENARIOS

**Working in Office Environments:** If you work in an open environment, be sure to maintain at least 6 feet distance from co-workers. If possible, have at least one workspace separating you from another co-worker. You must wear a face mask or face covering at all times while in a shared work space/room.

Departments should assess open work environments and meeting rooms to institute measures to physically separate and increase distance between employees, other coworkers, and customers, such as:

YTC will place visual cues such as floor decals, colored tape, or signs to indicate to customers where they should stand while waiting in line.

YTC will place one-way directional signage for large open work spaces with multiple through-ways to increase distance between employees moving through the space.

YTC may consider designating specific stairways for up or down traffic if building space allows.

If you work in an office, no more than one person should be in the same room unless the required 6 feet of distancing can be consistently maintained. If more than one person is in a room, masks/face coverings must be worn at all times.

Face masks/coverings must be worn by any staff in a reception/receiving area. Face masks/coverings must be used when inside any YTC facility where others are present, including walking in narrow hallways where others travel, and in break rooms, conference rooms and other meeting locations.

Employees should refrain from visiting other offices and buildings, unless necessary for business operations. During your time on-site, employees are encouraged to communicate with colleagues and supervisors as needed by email, instant message, telephone or other available technology rather than face-to-face.

**Plexiglass Barriers:** The College has installed plexiglass shields across campus at walk-up counters, reception areas, and select offices. If additional barriers

are needed, please contact Facilities Management at 803-981-7282 or [facilitiesmanagement@yorktech.edu](mailto:facilitiesmanagement@yorktech.edu). Restrooms: Restrooms will be appropriately marked to maintain social distancing. Be certain to wash your hands thoroughly after each restroom visit to reduce the potential transmission of the virus.

**Elevators:** No more than one person may enter an elevator at a time, so please use the stairs whenever possible. If using the elevator, a face mask/covering must be worn and avoid touching the elevator buttons with your exposed hand/fingers, if possible. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol upon exiting the elevator.

**Meetings:** Convening in groups increases the risk of viral transmission. During your time on-site, you are encouraged to communicate with your colleagues and supervisors as needed by email, instant message, telephone or other available technology rather than face-to-face. You can also use a range of available collaboration tools (e.g. Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams, telephone, etc.).

In-person meetings are limited to the restrictions of local, state and federal orders and should not exceed the posted limited room occupancy. All in-person meetings must be approved by the appropriate Associate Dean, Dean, Associate Vice President, Vice President, or Executive Committee member.

**Meals/Breaks:** Before and after eating, wash your hands thoroughly to reduce the potential transmission of the virus.

Employees are encouraged to take food from break rooms or vending areas back to their office area or eat outside, if reasonable. Break rooms are limited to one person at a time. Individuals utilizing common areas should not sit facing one another and must maintain a minimum of six (6) feet between the next person.

Only remove your mask or face covering in order to eat, then put it back on. Wipe all surfaces, including table, refrigerator handle, coffee machine, microwave, etc. after using in common areas.

## ENTER/EXIT CONTROL (BUILDINGS, CLASSROOMS, OFFICES)

Entry to buildings will be regulated and monitored. Each building will have designated entry points, marked with the appropriate signage. Hand sanitizer stations and face masks will be available upon entry. To remain compliant with fire code, all exits will be available for use.

Supervisors should be familiarized with designated building access points and coordinate arrival and departure times of staff to reduce congestion during typical “rush hours” of the business day. Staff arrival and departures should be scheduled in 30- minute increments to reduce personal interactions at building access points, hallways, stairs/elevators, etc.

## CAMPUS VISITS

When permitted, visitors to campus, including vendors, are required to wear face masks/coverings and adhere to the College’s safety protocols as outlined in this document. If a visitor is unwilling to do so, Campus Safety will ask them to leave the campus.

## TRAVEL

Travel is limited to essential business only, until further notice.

If an employee must travel in College vehicles to perform their job duties, the College may limit the number of employees to one per vehicle at a time. If the job duty requires traveling with more than one person, all occupants must wear face masks/coverings, use hand sanitizer, and allow for circulation of outside air while in the vehicle.

To the extent possible, an employee is encouraged to drive their personal vehicle for essential business travel.

All State and College Travel Guidelines must be adhered.

## INFORMATION SERVICES

Information Services will continue to provide service remotely, to the extent possible. In lieu of visiting the IT Help Desk in person, please call, email, or submit a ticket.

## TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Before employees return to the workplace, YTC will provide training to employees on public health guidance, College specific guidelines, and information about properly wearing personal protective equipment (PPE), and cleaning and disinfecting protocols.

Completion of select training is required before an employee can return to the workplace.

## MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP), First Sun, is available to offer emotional support during this stressful period. Telephonic or video counseling is available, and you can access this service using most smartphones, tablets and computers with a camera. You may contact First Sun EAP by calling 800-968-8143 or visiting the First Sun EAP website, [www.firstsuneap.com](http://www.firstsuneap.com).

## QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

For any questions or concerns regarding adherence to the guidelines outlined in this plan, please contact the YTC Crisis Management Team using the [COVID-19 Question and Concern Form](#).

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

[South Carolina Department of Administration  
Re-entry Plan for State Employees](#)

[South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[York Technical College Employee Daily Self-Check](#)

[YTC Campus Building Maps  
\(with designated entry points and hand sanitizer stations\)](#)