

RCUH ADVISORY #5 - FOR PROJECT PIs DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

This advisory, the fifth in the series of RCUH advisories, provides guidance to PIs preparing for employees returning to the workplace. The information can be applied to the wide range of RCUH projects and is presented in the following sections: preparing for return to the workplace, ensuring workplace safety, addressing employees' concerns, and returning project equipment. Projects with unique features may require additional guidance. A list of resources that PIs can consult as a starting point for the specific information they seek is provided at the end of this advisory.

PREPARING FOR RETURN TO THE OFFICE/WORKPLACE

The orderly and smooth transition of employees' return to the workplace is greatly dependent on your preparation prior to this event. Consider the following when developing your plan:

- **Designate a date when all employees will return back to the office/workplace.** This will avoid confusion and complaints.
- **Develop a communications plan for staff, visitors, and vendors.** *Staff:* inform staff via email of the date they should return to the workplace and the changes in work practices they can expect (see [Attachment 1](#) for sample letter). *Visitors:* discourage worksite visits and post sign (see [Attachment 2](#)) at the entrance to the project site as required by the Governor's 8th Supplementary Proclamation. See Attachments [3](#) and [4](#) for other information you may wish to post or share with your staff. *Vendors:* encourage vendors to reduce their physical interactions and to use electronic means to conduct business transactions.
- **Update unemployment insurance claims.** If you have furloughed employees (e.g., on unpaid leave status), inform RCUH HR (nsakamoto@rcuh.com) of all employees returning to paid work status. RCUH will notify the State Department of Labor & Industrial Relations of these recalled employees.
- **Develop a workplace safety plan.** To ensure physical distancing among employees, re-arrange work stations, employ staggered work hours, and use other means to protect the health and safety of your staff. Provide cleaning supplies and hand sanitizers and assign staff on a rotating basis to clean high-touch, commonly used surfaces periodically (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, countertops, etc.). See the sections below for other items your plan should include.
- **Be prepared to address employees' concerns.** Review the requirements expected of PIs in relation to their employees' health and safety so you are prepared when these issues arise. See the information in the section below on addressing employees' concerns for an overview. When you have personnel questions or are in doubt, do not hesitate to contact RCUH Human Resources (nsakamoto@rcuh.com).

ENSURING WORKPLACE SAFETY

Your workplace safety plan should include items such as the following to clearly communicate your expectations and the new work practices for all staff members. Employees should follow these practices:

- Use a face mask which covers their nose and mouth when interacting with others.
- Practice physical distancing at meetings, during lunch breaks, and in the hallways, elevators, restrooms, and automobiles. Refrain from congregating in groups unless adequate physical distancing is possible.
- Use electronic means to meet, such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, WebEx, and telephone conferences.

(Continues on Page 2)

ENSURING WORKPLACE SAFETY

(Continued from Page 1)

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- Avoid physical contact, such as handshakes, hugs, and other traditional greetings.
- Avoid touching their face, especially eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Be considerate of others: cover nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing.
- Clean their PC keyboard/mouse, phone, desk, equipment, and other work tools, and avoid using these items when they belong to another person.
- Be supportive of colleagues, especially during stressful times, and help with cleaning common areas.
- If feeling sick before leaving for work, inform the PI and stay at home. If feeling sick at work, inform the PI and go home. Employees should return to work only if they are feeling well.

ADDRESSING EMPLOYEES' CONCERNS

Your employees have different life and family situations, health conditions, social and emotional needs, and other circumstances. Employees may come to you with the situations below. In all cases, do not hesitate to contact RCUH Human Resources (nsakamoto@rcuh.com) to discuss the case and receive guidance.

- **Underlying high-risk health condition.** These may include asthma; hemoglobin disorders; severe obesity; chronic diseases relating to the kidney, lung, heart, and liver; and other conditions. If your employee informs you that he/she has one or more of these high-risk conditions:
 - Allow the employee to telework if possible. If this is not possible, place the employee on a paid or unpaid leave status.
 - Keep the health condition private/confidential.
- **Child care/Elder care.** An employee who is unable to return to work due to child care issues may qualify for one of the benefits under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). An employee with a dependent who is elderly may also qualify for a benefit. Contact RCUH HR (rcuh_benefits@rcuh.com) for more information.
- **Fear of returning to work.** There is no law that protects an employee's refusal to return to work due to "fear" of being infected by the coronavirus. If an employee invokes this claim, inform the individual that you have implemented new work practices that comply with OSHA's administrative controls.

RETURNING PROJECT EQUIPMENT

The PI is responsible for project equipment, data, and work tools. If these items were on loan to employees when they worked remotely, the items should be returned and accounted for. Your return to work plan should include the following:

- **A date when work tools must be returned.** When this date coincides with the date when the employee returns to work, it avoids confusion and is easily remembered.
- **Procedures for the return of work tools.** Who is responsible for the returned tools? Where should the items be returned? How will the items be accounted for? Where will the returned items be stored?

RESOURCES

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.** Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes. <https://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>
- **U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration.** Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19. <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>
- **U.S. equal Employment Opportunity Commission.** What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws. <https://www.eeoc.gov/wysk/what-you-should-know-about-covid-19-and-ada-rehabilitation-act-and-other-eeo-laws>

DATE: June XX, 2020

FROM: _____
Principal Investigator

SUBJECT: Returning to Usual and Customary Work Operations

Aloha and welcome back! Effective _____, 2020, we will transition back to the workplace. Our overriding priority is to ensure the safety and well-being of our employees and others throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. For this reason, the protocols below will be implemented when you return to work. All employees should do the following:

- Use a face mask which covers your nose and mouth when interacting with others.
- Practice physical distancing at meetings; when eating with another person; and in the hallways, elevators, restrooms, and automobiles. Refrain from congregating in groups unless adequate physical distancing is possible.
- Use electronic means to meet, such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, WebEx, and telephone conferences whenever possible.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- Avoid physical contact, such as handshakes, hugs, and other traditional greetings.
- Avoid touching your face, especially eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Be considerate of others: cover nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing.
- Clean your PC keyboard/mouse, phone, desk, and other work tools and equipment, and avoid using other people's equipment.
- Be supportive of your colleagues, especially during stressful times, and help with cleaning common areas.
- If you are feeling sick before leaving for work, inform me and stay at home. If feeling sick at work, inform me and go home. You should return to work only if you are feeling well.

Cleaning supplies and hand sanitizers will be available. I will be assigning rotating staff to periodically clean high-touch, commonly used surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, countertops, etc.).

All project equipment and work tools (e.g., computers, printers, files, etc.) that were on loan when working remotely should be returned on _____, the day you return to work. Please check them in with _____, who will inform you where to put them.

Please contact me if you have any questions or have concerns relating to your work or personal situation. Thank you for helping to ensure a smooth transition as we return to the workplace.

Attachment



To reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure and to prevent the spread of the virus, please read and comply with the following instructions.

Call the number below if you have any questions.

DO NOT ENTER:

- If you have had close contact with an individual infected with COVID-19 within the last 14 days.
- If you are currently experiencing a fever, cough, shortness of breath, or not feeling well.

IF CLEARED TO ENTER:

- Wear a face mask that covers your nose and mouth.
- Maintain 6-foot physical distancing at all times.
- Refrain from shaking hands and other unnecessary physical contact.

Please contact _____ for further information and guidance.

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Thank you for your cooperation.

STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

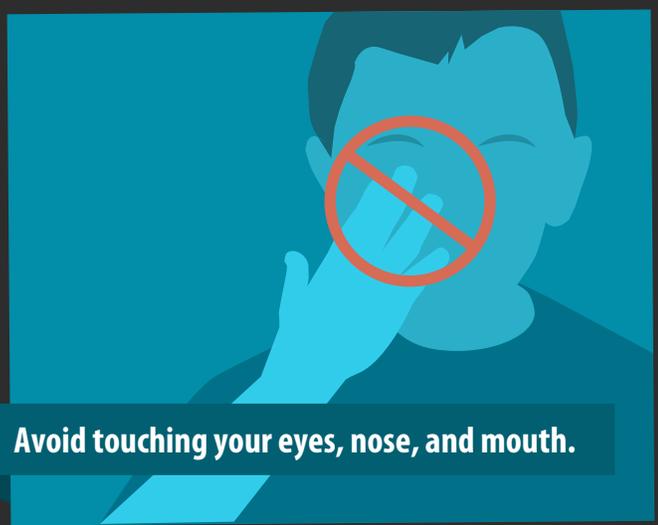
Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19

COVID-19

Coronavirus Disease 2019



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?



FEVER



COUGH



DIFFICULTY BREATHING



SEVERE ILLNESS

How is COVID-19 spread?



Through coughing and sneezing



Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands



Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands



Because COVID-19 is new, we are learning more each day about the transmission patterns and incubation periods.

If you have traveled to a country with widespread community spread of COVID-19, stay home or in your hotel room for 14 days after leaving that country and monitor your health for symptoms.

- Avoid group settings, including work and school.
- Have another family member/friend, who didn't travel, run necessary errands for you, such as picking up food or medicine.
- Avoid using public transportation, taxis, or ride-shares if possible.

For a list of countries with widespread sustained community transmission, visit www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers.

How can I protect myself and our community?

Everyone in our community

- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth, especially with unwashed hands.
- Get your flu shot to reduce the chance of developing symptoms that can be confused with COVID-19. Everyone ages 6 months or older should be vaccinated against the flu.

If you have traveled to an affected area and feel sick

- Stay home and avoid contact with others except for seeking care.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing. Throw the tissue in the trash.
- If you need medical care, call ahead to your healthcare provider or an emergency room and let them know about your travel history. If you need emergency medical care, call 911.
- If you have difficulty accessing medical care or have questions how to care for yourself at home, call 211.

2-1-1

Get Connected. Get Help.™

For more information about COVID-19,
call our partners at Aloha United Way 2-1-1.

Or visit our website at:

health.hawaii.gov/docd/advisories/novel-coronavirus-2019.

