

Updated Guidance for VUMC Non-Clinical Functions

On March 25 VUMC provided guidance intended to minimize the risk of COVID-19 for employees performing nonclinical functions. All leaders were instructed to enable work-from-home arrangements for individuals with nonclinical duties. We appreciate the manner in which you are successfully adapting to meet the challenges associated with remote operations and new ways of working.

All VUMC employees and activities are essential for the ongoing success of the Medical Center. While VUMC has restarted elective clinical care and is preparing to increase nonclinical activities over the coming weeks, it is clear that COVID-19 will pose a health risk to our employees and patients for many months. In order to reduce exposure to all employees, work-from-home will continue to play a major role in our operations. This approach limits the occupancy of our facilities, improving safety for patients, employees involved in direct clinical care, and employees working on-site to support areas involved in crisis management and support.

As nonclinical activities are resumed, uncertainties are to be expected and close monitoring will be needed; this will not be an immediate return to business as usual.

Key Principles:

- VUMC nonclinical areas will resume operations in four phases that are coordinated with those of the Roadmap for Reopening Nashville <https://www.asafenashville.org/roadmap-for-reopening-nashville>
- Infection control practices will align with the Metro Nashville Roadmap guidelines.
- Nonclinical activity protocols will also be aligned with VUMC clinical enterprise policies covering COVID-19 infection control and monitoring.
- VUMC-wide communication will accompany progression between phases.
- If metrics of COVID-19 transmission and health system capacity change significantly, VUMC in coordination with city and state officials may be required to return to a prior phase and re-impose restrictions on business activity. Leaders of nonclinical teams must develop a shutdown contingency plan in case it becomes necessary to reduce activities rapidly.

- Any negative trends in COVID-19 infection in an area of the enterprise will be addressed rapidly with appropriate biosafety measures and may require a return to practices associated with a more restricted phase in that area.

The following guidance applies to all nonclinical functions. Leaders (Department Chairs, Center/Institute Directors, Department Managers) will provide additional guidance and/or specific variances for employees performing functions identified as *crisis management and support* (see below following “Phases in Resuming Operations”). **VUMC will issue institution-wide notifications regarding the date for commencing each Phase.**

The following safety practices should be followed now and through all four phases:

- Whenever working on-site, adhere to strict physical distancing (defined as 6 ft) and follow universal COVID-19 precautions (frequent hand washing with soap and water for 20 seconds or hand sanitizer, including before and after eating).
- All employees must monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms, including new onset cough, fever, and other symptoms specified by the CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>). If you have symptoms immediately isolate yourself, contact your health care provider and notify your supervisor. VUMC will continue temperature screening and has begun COVID-19 symptom checks at employee entrances.
- Cloth masks must be worn in public areas of the Medical Center including hallways, lobbies, meeting rooms, elevators, cafeterias, in patient care areas, and in shared workspaces. This applies to off-site and leased building space as well as the VUMC main campus. Avoid touching your face or mask. If you touch your face or mask, wash or sanitize your hands.
- Virtual meeting applications (such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom) are encouraged as an alternative to face-to-face meetings or work-related travel.
- Maintenance of physical distancing while on campus should occur through Phase 3, using split or staggered shifts and scheduled use of high-density areas/functions (e.g., shared spaces). Leaders will continuously assess physical distancing for personnel relative to space design, type of role, and the nature of work functions.

- Employees not involved in essential functions who are 65 years or older, or those with high-risk factors related to COVID-19, should continue to work from home in a manner consistent with VUMC Human Resource policy.

Phases in Resuming Operations:

Phase 1

- On and off campus on-site activities can be conducted with strict physical distancing and universal COVID-19 precautions in place. Rooms may be occupied at up to 50% capacity under circumstances where physical distancing of not less than 6 feet can be maintained.
- Work from home continues to be strongly encouraged.
- Gatherings of up to 10 people are permitted if physical distancing can be achieved.
- Avoid use of shared break areas and supplies, and if utilized, disinfect supplies and all surfaces before and after use.

Phase 2

- On and off campus on-site activities can be conducted with strict physical distancing and universal COVID-19 precautions in place. Rooms may be occupied at up to 75% capacity under circumstances where physical distancing of not less than 6 feet can be maintained.
- Work-from-home continues to be encouraged.
- Gatherings of up to 25 people are permitted if physical distancing can be achieved.
- Avoid use of shared break areas and supplies, and if utilized, disinfect supplies and all surfaces before and after use.

Phase 3

- On and off campus on-site activities can be conducted with strict physical distancing and universal COVID-19 precautions in place. Rooms may be occupied at up to 100% capacity under circumstances where physical distancing can be maintained.
- Work-from-home continues to be encouraged.

- Gatherings of up to 100 people are permitted if physical distancing can be achieved.
- Avoid use of shared break areas and supplies, and if utilized, disinfect supplies and all surfaces before and after use.

Phase 4

- On and off campus on-site activities can be conducted with universal COVID-19 precautions in place. Physical distancing is encouraged but is no longer required.
- Work-from-home is optional.
- Larger gatherings are permitted with size limits to be determined.
- Shared break areas and supplies should be disinfected before and after use.

Certain *crisis management and support* functions may require exceptions to this Guidance (including, but not limited to, work-from-home limitations) which will be specified by area leaders. These functions include, at a minimum:

- 1) Activities directly impacting or supporting patient care activity. Examples include Human Resources areas with duties that are necessarily on-site, IT personnel supporting break/fix activities for hardware and software, and human subjects research activities where a delay in the activities would adversely impact the participants.
- 2) Activities supporting coronavirus research and training. Examples include research activities aimed at coronavirus infection, core services utilized by research and training programs working on coronavirus and/or our care response, and training activities that support redeployment of people to workforce areas with growing needs.
- 3) Infrastructure areas that will continue to support VUMC clinical operations and crisis management and support. Examples include plant operations, employee transportation, and food services.