

# CUIMC SPACE AND FACILITIES GUIDELINES

*Issued: May 27, 2020*

*Updated: December 7, 2020*



COLUMBIA

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
IRVING MEDICAL CENTER

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***The guidelines referenced here were updated as of December 7, 2020.***  
*For questions about the space and facilities-related guidelines listed here, please visit [cumc.columbia.edu/facilities-management](https://cumc.columbia.edu/facilities-management) or email CUIMC Facilities Management at [cumc.facilities@columbia.edu](mailto:cumc.facilities@columbia.edu).*

# INTRODUCTION

As part of its efforts to support campus operations during the continued COVID-19 recovery period, Columbia University Irving Medical Center has established interim protocols for some of its campus operations.



Spaces addressed with these guidelines include, but are not limited to:

- Administrative offices
- Library and study spaces
- Computer lounges
- Clinical spaces
- Classrooms and lecture halls (large, medium, small)
- Research laboratories
- Simulation spaces
- Dining facilities
- Public and open areas: Building and elevator lobbies; building entries and vestibules; reception areas and waiting rooms; hallways and public corridors
- Common spaces: Break rooms; conference rooms; pantries; restrooms; vending spaces; copy and printer areas; mailrooms; other congregation areas
- Other points of service or contact: Transaction counters; information booths; security checkpoints

# CAMPUS SPACE GUIDELINES

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The medical center comprises a wide variety of spaces tailored to support the needs of your respective schools and departments; as a result, we recognize that often ‘one size does not fit all.’ The guidelines presented below are intended to be broad across several categories, understanding further conversations about spaces unique and specific to your department may be required.

## PUBLIC SPACES

- For the health and safety of our community, we have reconfigured—and in some cases limited the access of—our indoor and outdoor public spaces to minimize occupancy, discourage gathering, and support physical distancing.
  - These spaces include classrooms, lecture halls, auditoriums, building lobbies, the Knowledge Center, Hammer Teaching & Learning Center, 50 Haven Ave. student lounge, and Haven Plaza.
- Utilization of these spaces are continuously reassessed in accordance with CDC, New York State, and University guidelines.
- Visit the [Facilities Management and campus Services website](#) for the latest information on public space operations and availability.

## GENERAL WORKSPACE GUIDELINES

- Evaluate high- and medium-risk interaction zones within your workspaces, notably in common areas such as conference/meeting rooms, copier/printer areas, break rooms, restrooms, and reception spaces.
  - Avoid significant changes to existing furniture configurations; however, consider removal and storage of excess seating in conference rooms or reception areas to discourage gathering.
  - To maximize capacity while maintaining proper physical distancing, consider temporarily converting small or medium-sized conference rooms into “hoteling” work positions, prioritizing use and assignment based on your operational need.
  - Encourage the reduction of unnecessary printing and copying where feasible.

- Consider spacing printers where feasible. This would require access to electrical and data outlets, and require the support of your internal IT departments or CUIMC IT.
- Base temporary operational needs around maintaining a minimum six-foot distancing between occupants where feasible.
  - Identify critical staff members who must return to work and create rotational schedules where needed that align with available (de-densified) workspace.
  - Factor in critical outside consultants, clients, or regular visitors to your space when evaluating your workspace density and use.
  - Evaluate existing furniture layouts and configurations in workspaces to encourage physical distancing during working hours.
  - Assume half of open office or administrative workstations would be occupied at any one time to maintain physical distancing.
  - Identify high- and medium-risk traffic areas and establish traffic flows wherever possible.
- Assign desks or work positions on a rotating basis.
  - Consider introducing shift work either on a daily or weekly basis. Alternately, where feasible, consider staggering start times for staff.
  - Track staff seating assignments where practical.
  - Consider establishing a rotating shared office space wherever possible to accommodate employees who currently work in cubicles.
- Direct in-person meetings in offices should be reduced or performed virtually.
- Any space density concerns should be directed to appropriate contacts within each school or department.

## SPACE-SPECIFIC ASSESSMENTS

- Schools and departments may request assessments of specific facilities and workspaces.
  - Assessments will include confirmation that proposed temporary space changes not only follow recommended health and safety protocols, but also are flexible, maintainable, and code compliant.
  - For additional questions, or to request a space assessment, please email [workplace\\_assessment@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:workplace_assessment@cumc.columbia.edu).

# FACILITIES ENHANCEMENTS AND RESOURCES

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Using enhanced resources and industry best practices outlined by agencies such as the CDC, NYS DOH, and OSHA, Facilities Management is supporting the medical center during this time by providing enhanced custodial and engineering services.

## CLEANING AND DISINFECTING ENHANCEMENTS

- **Public and Shared Spaces**

- Custodial Services installed hand sanitizer dispensers in all lobbies, elevator landings, and security desks.
- Dedicated custodial staff members are assigned to focus on increased frequencies of cleaning and disinfection of high-touch point areas in all public spaces (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, etc.).
- Custodial staff members have increased the patrolling and maintenance of public restrooms to ensure soap dispensers are full to support frequent hand washing and facilities are regularly cleaned and disinfected. Custodial staff also ensures sanitary facilities remain operational and are stocked at all times and provide additional soap, paper towels, and hand sanitizer when needed.
- For additional information on custodial service enhancements, visit the [Facilities Management and Campus Services website](#).
- For questions about public area custodial guidelines, please contact the CUIMC Facilities Customer Service Center at 212-305-HELP (4357), option 3 or at [cumc.facilities@columbia.edu](mailto:cumc.facilities@columbia.edu).

- **School/Department-Specific Spaces**

- Schools/departments are encouraged to augment the disinfection and sanitizing of their office spaces by purchasing and maintaining additional hand sanitizer dispensers/wipes in office suites, conference rooms, kitchens or staff lounges.
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers must be stored in accordance with FDNY guidance. For questions about this requirement, email [cumcfiresafety@columbia.edu](mailto:cumcfiresafety@columbia.edu).

- Custodial Services will maintain regular housekeeping practices, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of hard work surfaces and other elements of the work environment.
  - Schools/departments may request specific cleaning and disinfecting services in addition to the routine scope of work.
  - Work order requests for deep cleaning and disinfecting, cleaning between classes/patient visits, or event-based cleaning are considered supplemental to the standard custodial routine.
  - Supplemental cleaning and disinfecting services are billable and may be requested by [submitting a work order request](#).
- **Self-Service Guidelines for Individual Spaces**
  - Encourage best practices for individuals to clean and disinfect their personal areas daily, including work stations/desks:
    - Wipe down surfaces in one direction and don't go back over it in the opposite direction because it will deposit germs that were just cleaned up.
    - Routinely wipe down all frequently touched surfaces such as workstations, keyboards and phones, countertops, copiers, light switches, and doorknobs.

## DISINFECTING AN AREA EXPOSED TO COVID-19

- If someone is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 in a laboratory or non-laboratory space, close off the area used by that person and notify the University's **COVID-19 Contact Tracing Program** via the COVID-19 hotline at 212-854-9355 (Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.) or via email at [covidtesttrace@columbia.edu](mailto:covidtesttrace@columbia.edu). If responsible parties can close off affected areas, they do not necessarily need to close operations.
- After you've notified the Contact Tracing Team and they've conducted an assessment to determine the appropriate response, contact notify Facilities Management at 212-305-4357 (HELP), option 3.

## AIR HANDLING UNIT (AHU) ENHANCEMENTS

- **Purpose & Need**
  - As part of CUIMC's collective efforts to modify campus operations following the COVID-19 pandemic, it was necessary to review critical building infrastructures, including its air handling unit systems.
  - The information listed below summarizes the basic design parameters for the medical center's existing portfolio of Air Handling Units (AHUs) as well as outlines interim mitigation strategies introduced to minimize the spread of COVID-19. Any changes to AHU operations and mitigation strategies are the result of guidance received by government agencies as well as industry-leading organizations.

- **Design Criteria**
  - The existing building systems were designed in accordance with the NYC building code, the International Mechanical Code and the indoor air quality standards set forth by ASHRAE.
  - The existing building systems were not designed to mitigate the spread of viruses such as COVID-19.
  - Existing building HVAC systems all have filters to clean the air before distributing it into building spaces.
  - Existing building HVAC systems are divided into (2) categories: (1) 100% Outside Air and (2) Recirculation Systems.
- **Description of Existing Air Handler Units**
  - There are 138 AHUs in total across the CUIMC portfolio of buildings; 59 are 100% outside air units with no recirculation, 79 are recirculation units.
- **100% Outside Air Systems**
  - 100% outside air systems do not re-circulate air within occupied or unoccupied spaces. All air that is brought into occupied spaces is carried out of the building through dedicated exhaust systems in a once through fashion.
  - The medical center is equipped with 59 AHUs (43%) operating as 100% outside air systems that supply laboratories.
- **Recirculation Systems**
  - Recirculation systems take air from all ventilated spaces and bring it back to a central AHU unit where it is mixed with a percentage of outside air in a plenum before contacting the filters. Air from all spaces is interchanged.
  - Facilities Engineering transitioned 79 recirculating units to 100% outside air units.
- For questions about air handling unit enhancements, please contact the CUIMC Facilities Customer Service Center at 212-305-HELP (4357), option 3 or at [cumc.facilities@columbia.edu](mailto:cumc.facilities@columbia.edu).

## HVAC SYSTEMS VIRUS MITIGATION

- To supplement other virus mitigation efforts including, but not limited to physical distancing, use of face coverings, and enhanced cleaning measures, Facilities Engineering explored additional modifications to existing building HVAC systems.
- **Air Filtration**
  - Replaced existing unit filter media to higher grade. Evaluated each fan for air flow rates based on the filter media needed.



- **Ventilation**
  - Increasing outdoor air ventilation and general exhaust ventilation to greatest extent possible.
  - Transitioned 79 recirculating units to 100% outside air units.
  - Minimized or eliminated recirculation of central AHU air.
  - Minimized or eliminated recirculation of fan coil air.
  - Maintaining positive differential pressure across supply and return sections of heat recovery units to eliminate cross-contamination.
  - Keeping HVAC systems in operation for longer hours, 24/7 if possible, in order to facilitate the removal of virus particles from the building and to reduce the settlement of virus particles onto surfaces.
  - For buildings without central HVAC systems, increasing window airing.
  - Maintaining negative pressure in all toilet rooms to sweep air from the room and to minimize fecal-oral transmission from toilet flush aerosol. Operating toilet exhausts 24/7.
- For questions about interim HVAC system mitigation efforts, please contact the CUIMC Facilities Customer Service Center at 212-305-HELP (4357), option 3 or at [cumc.facilities@columbia.edu](mailto:cumc.facilities@columbia.edu).

## CONTRACTORS, VENDORS, AND VISITORS

- Columbia University is required as part of New York City's reopening plan to screen personnel who enter and are currently working on campus, including all contractors, vendors, and visitors, to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Access for non-employees to any CUIMC space is strictly limited.
  - Establish a notifications protocol for greeting any outside visitors.
  - Avoid bringing visitors into any shared or common spaces.
- All contractors, vendors and visitors should be approved and notified in advanced that they must wear appropriate PPE when entering any CUIMC building.
  - All contractors, visitors, and vendors should be registered by emailing [ps-mc-guestaccessrequests@columbia.edu](mailto:ps-mc-guestaccessrequests@columbia.edu) at least 24 hours in advance.
  - Include the date/time and building/floor the visitor/vendor will be visiting as well as who should be notified when they arrive, including a phone number.
- All contractors/visitors/vendors must have a valid government ID, be wearing proper PPE, and complete a [daily attestation and symptom check](#) prior to entering any Columbia building.
  - Each school and department is responsible to track any visitors, vendors or

contractors in their spaces. The school or department should keep these records for at least 30 days.

- For Facilities-related contractors and vendors, visit the [Facilities Management and Campus Service website](#) for additional guidance.

## PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- As we resume additional activity on campus, the following guidelines on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) are being provided to help employees, students and postdocs engage in safe practices while on campus.
- **All personnel on Columbia property and in Columbia facilities must wear face covering at all times, with the sole exception of when an individual is in a private office without any other person present and the door closed.**
- **All Faculty, Staff, and Students**
  - Every person needs to wear a face covering upon entering a CUIMC building. Face coverings must be worn over the mouth and nose at all times.
  - Any individuals arriving at a CUIMC building entrance without a face covering will be provided a surgical mask at building entrances.
  - The distribution of surgical masks, as well as specialty PPE if required, will be managed at the department level. Information on departmental procurement of PPE is provided below.
- **Faculty and Staff Conducting Laboratory Research:**
  - In addition to wearing a face covering or surgical mask when on campus, all laboratory personnel must wear the PPE appropriate for the hazards of the specific laboratory research being performed.
  - These requirements should be described in each lab's Laboratory Assessment Tool and Chemical Hygiene Plan (LATCH).
  - Refer to Columbia University's [Personal Protective Equipment Policy](#) for additional guidance and contact [labsafety@columbia.edu](mailto:labsafety@columbia.edu) if EH&S assistance is required.
- **Faculty and Staff Conducting Clinical Research**
  - Individuals who have direct interaction with research participants should use PPE consistent with guidance for clinical personnel involved in patient care.
  - N95 masks may be appropriate for interaction with clinical research participants if there is significant risk of aerosol or micro droplet exposure. Research groups should document in their manual of procedures the PPE that is appropriate.
  - Individuals who do not have direct interaction with research participants should follow the guidance for other research personnel not engaged in patient care. (*See laboratory research section above*)

- **Purchasing Process**

- Surgical masks and any specialized PPE will be purchased centrally via CU and secured at vendor's partner's warehouse.
- Disinfectants (wipes, sanitizers, sprays) will be purchased centrally via CU.
- Facilities provided an initial order of surgical masks for each department. Department administrators should coordinate orders for their departments and forward to [facilities\\_ppe@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:facilities_ppe@cumc.columbia.edu). Departments may then coordinate pick up of the initial orders at the loading bays for each building.
- Schools, central units, and departments are responsible for placing subsequent orders to the vendors against the central purchase order via ARC PO or P-card orders. Procurement will issue specific ordering instructions to include: items, vendors, pricing, and quantities.
- Departments will receive PPE and/or disinfectants via direct destination delivery.
- Departments will be responsible for incurring the cost of the PPE and/or disinfectants for their employees and students at the workplace (with the exception of the initial order).
- Ambulatory clinical practices within ColumbiaDoctors, will continue to request PPE and disinfectants from the FPO.
- Ambulatory clinical practices within College of Dental Medicine and School of Nursing will continue to request PPE and disinfectants from their respective schools.

## SIGNAGE

- **Public Area Signage**

- Facilities Management and Campus Services will purchase and install the following signage:
  - Generic building signage that outlines physical distancing and health and safety best practices in public-facing areas across the medical center (e.g., building entries, common spaces).
  - Directional signage, floor markings and decals, and elevator signage to indicate where people should stand in lobbies, maximum number of occupants, and elevator etiquette/best practices.
- Construction site signage will be purchased by the general contractor with approval from a Facilities Management and Campus Services project representative.
- For questions about public area signage or report an issue with any public area signage, please contact the CUIMC Facilities Customer Service Center at 212-305-HELP (4357), option 3 or at [cumc.facilities@columbia.edu](mailto:cumc.facilities@columbia.edu).

- **School/Department-Specific Signage**
  - CUIMC schools/colleges, central units, departments, and clinical practice sites will be responsible for providing their own specific signage.
    - CUIMC Communications will have generic signage templates available for schools and departments to download via the CUIMC Digital Asset Management system, [ResourceSpace \(UNI login required\)](#).
    - CUIMC schools/colleges, central units, departments, and clinical practice may contact [Columbia Print](#) to review and request any customized signage.
    - Consideration should be given to signage promoting hand hygiene and PPE, best practices including physical distancing while seated or standing, courtesy in pantries and break rooms, and limited capacity seating in classrooms and waiting areas, to name a few.
  - CUIMC schools/colleges, central units, and clinical practice sites located on campus should [submit a work order request to Facilities Management](#) if specific signage installation requires hardware.
  - Clinical practice sites located off-campus should arrange for signage installation as per current building protocols.