



USC University of
Southern California

**COVID-19
Return to Work Guidelines for Supervisors
Returning to USC Worksites**

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Background

USC plans to return employees to work in a measured and phased manner as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. USC's phased-in approach focuses on thoughtfully returning employees over time in a coordinated process to enable appropriate physical distancing and availability of personal protective equipment (PPE).

USC's plans will stay aligned with local orders and ordinances across Los Angeles, as well as the State of California's Resilience Roadmap. USC's plans follow recommendations from the federal government (Opening Guidelines), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), California Department of Public Health, and all applicable federal guidelines.

As the University begins the process of expanding operations, the COVID-19 Return to Work guidelines have been developed to support employees as they either continue working remotely or are asked to return to work on a USC worksite.

While the terms "employee" and "supervisor" are not apt for faculty relations, to keep the wording of this guidelines document as simple as possible, "supervisor" refers to anyone who has direct reports including deans of faculty and department chairs. "Employee" refers to faculty, staff, and student workers. See the memo, "Information for Faculty about Returning to Work in Person on Campus" for faculty-specific policies that govern if there is any contradiction with these guidelines or other documents.

Our knowledge and understanding of the COVID-19 virus continues to evolve. Our policies and plans will be updated where appropriate as more information becomes available.

Remote Work

Working Remotely: Employees should continue working remotely, unless they have been instructed to come onsite by their supervisor (supervisors must confirm their department's Restart Plan was approved prior to returning employees to campus). It is important to avoid a large density of people on campus. Accordingly, employees working from home should not complete the daily wellness health assessment discussed below.

Employees working from home should continue to self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms.

Employees should review the Remote Work Guidelines and access additional remote work documents [on the Manager Gateway](#).

Return to the Workplace

Training Requirement: All employees who are returning to a USC worksite must complete the Health, Hygiene and Safety for Employees training module (researchers must complete the researcher-specific training; faculty must complete the faculty-specific training once available). The module covers proper handwashing, respiratory etiquette, PPE, sanitation protocols, and transmission prevention for vulnerable populations, as well as comprehensive information on campus return expectations (i.e., support programs, safety measures), and any additional topics subsequently required.

Employees must complete the required training to be allowed to return to a USC worksite.

Departments will notify employees who are requested to return to a USC worksite. To complete the training, employees must login to [TrojanLearn](#). The TrojanLearn home page contains a link to the training modules in the rotating banner and on the left side of the page. Click "Launch" to launch the training module. Supervisors can track their team's progress by reviewing in TrojanLearn. Upon the employee's completion of the training, supervisors may also be notified via email. Supervisors must inform HR Partner of employees who have not completed the training on or before their return date.

Employees unable to access the training must contact their HR Partner or the HR Service Center at uschr@usc.edu. Non-exempt employees will be given an additional 15 minutes of pay to complete the training prior to returning to work.

Daily Health Assessment: All employees who have been instructed to return to work must complete a daily health assessment on any day they wish to come to campus. The daily [Trojan Check](#) health assessment is available in paper form on campus and via the web-based app each day. Upon completion of the assessment, it will generate an access pass, which employees must show to be allowed on campus.

Non-exempt employees will be compensated for the time spent completing the assessment. USC will automatically add three minutes to a non-exempt employee's time for completing the assessment. If the employee believes that they took longer to complete the assessment, the employee should inform their HR Partner so that the employee is paid for the additional time spent. If an employee requires additional technology assistance or instructions to complete the screening, their supervisor will assist accordingly.

In summary, to be granted access to a USC worksite and be permitted to remain there, all employees must complete the COVID-19 safety training AND perform the daily health assessment through Trojan Check.

Employees who do not comply with this public health guideline will be sent home by the supervisor or HR Partner. They may use available paid time off (e.g., vacation) until they return to work onsite with the required Trojan Check access pass.

Employees must be free of **ANY** symptoms potentially related to COVID-19 to remain on campus. Employees who do not pass the daily wellness health assessment must immediately:

1. Remain at home or leave campus if they completed the paper assessment on campus, and not come or return to campus
2. Inform their supervisor that they are unable to come to the workplace
3. Contact their healthcare provider for COVID-19 testing and medical care; and/or Contact USC to arrange for COVID-19 testing:
 - a. Keck/HSC employees only, call Keck Employee Health: 323-442-5219
 - b. General/UPC employees, call USC Student Health: 213-740-9355

Employees who do not complete the mandatory Trojan Check screening will not be allowed to return to work.

Discomfort with Returning to Work: If an employee expresses concerns about or otherwise refuses to come back on-site as requested, and the employee has not received an accommodation, the employee should contact their HR Partner or supervisor to engage in an interactive dialogue. Employees who cannot be accommodated may be required to use available time-off accruals (e.g., vacation) or

permitted to use sick leave. Established accommodation processes will be followed for employees with a disability who require an accommodation.

Childcare Needs: Schools and external childcare facilities may remain closed during USC's re-opening phases. USC offers childcare services through Bright Horizons, which will remain open. Supervisors are encouraged to share [childcare service information](#) with employees if they need support, and to be flexible when possible (e.g., considering split schedules, hybrid on-site/work-from-home options, etc.). If an employee is unable to return to work onsite after childcare options have been presented, they will be required to use available time-off accruals (e.g., vacation). An employee may also use available paid sick time, but the supervisor may not require the employee to do so. The employee may also be eligible to use unpaid time off under the Unpaid School Activities policy. Paid Family Leave benefits may be available depending on the employee's circumstance and location. Additionally, the supervisor should consider discussing Remote Work Policy with the employee if the employee is able to work remotely.

Symptoms and High-Risk Individuals

USC will follow current CDC guidelines as to what constitutes an employee in a "high risk" population. Employees who identify as "high risk," or have family members who identify as "high risk," may request temporary accommodations to the extent feasible, if they have been asked to return to a USC worksite. These employees should contact their supervisor prior to returning to work. The employee need not identify the employee's medical condition or risk category – simply informing the supervisor that the employee is in a "high risk" health category is sufficient. The supervisor should consult an HR Partner to begin an interactive dialogue with the employee to determine the accommodation needed and discuss options. The HR Partner should request documentation from the employee to support the need if not already known or obvious.

Developing Symptoms and Self-Reporting

Employees who are scheduled to return to the workplace and believe they have been exposed to someone who is presumptive positive for COVID-19, who have symptoms of COVID-19, or who are diagnosed with COVID-19, must immediately:

1. Stay at home and do **not** report to work. Employees should contact their healthcare provider and begin self-isolation until they have received negative test results. If an employee tests positive, they are advised to self-isolate and monitor symptoms for a period for 14 days since contact. Employees should contact the USC COVID-19 hotline at 213-740-6291 with any questions regarding self-isolation.

2. Inform their supervisor that they will not be at work. No other notification is required to USC.
3. Record this time as sick time through Workday (or appropriate timekeeping system) or contact the HR Partner (or the HR Service center uschr@usc.edu) with any questions.
4. Employees working remotely who feel able can elect to continue working remotely and do not have to use sick time.
5. For COVID-19 testing, employees can contact the following:
 - Keck/HSC employees only, call Keck Employee Health: 323-442-5219
 - General/UPC employees, call USC Student Health: 213-740-9355
 - Their healthcare provider for additional medical care

All USC employees who have been present in campus facilities or working in campus programs **who have tested positive** for COVID-19 must self-report and notify the University immediately by contacting the USC COVID-19 hotline at 213-740-6291 or covid19@usc.edu. Should they fail to report and/or continue to enter the campus, they will be endangering the safety of others and may face immediate disciplinary action up to and including termination without the benefit of any further warning.

Upon contacting the University, the employee will be asked for details of USC-related activities, identify other USC employees and students with whom they have had contact and where, the date of the diagnosis, and the date when symptoms first appeared. This information will only be shared with those who need to know to address health and safety considerations.

Personal Safety Practices

Coughing/Sneezing Hygiene: Employees must use caution while coughing and/or sneezing. Employees should practice covering the mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing or use the inside of the elbow. Used tissues should be discarded in the trash. Immediately following a sneeze or cough, wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizers.

Face Masks/Face Coverings: Face masks or face coverings must be worn by all employees working on campus when in the presence of others and in public settings (e.g., common workspaces, meeting rooms, break rooms, classrooms). The mask or cloth face covering is not a substitute for physical distancing.

Face coverings will be provided by USC and will be distributed by individual units. Disposable masks may only be worn for one day and then must be discarded. Employees may wear a cloth face covering in place of a disposable mask. The fabric design or pattern for cloth face coverings should be appropriate for the workplace.

The cloth face coverings should only be worn for one day at a time and must be properly laundered prior to reuse.

Gloves: Public health guidelines do not currently require gloves for all employees. However, there may be some roles where USC will require the use of gloves, and gloves will be provided to those employees. Employees may bring their own gloves if they meet the requirements set forth by the local guidelines and ordinances.

If an employee reports a latex allergy and unable to wear suitable gloves, supervisors should find alternative glove options that meet the requirements.

Hand Hygiene: Employees should wash or sanitize their hands every 30 minutes, especially when coming into contact with common surfaces or shared items (e.g., tools, screens) and mind the following:

1. Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds (wash all surfaces of the hand, fingers, nails, up to the wrists)
2. Wash hands after:
 - Using the restroom
 - Coughing or sneezing
 - Touching the face
 - Blowing the nose
 - Cleaning, sweeping, mopping
 - Touching an animal
 - Smoking
 - Before and after eating and drinking
 - Before starting a shift and after finishing a shift

Physical Distancing: All employees must maintain a six-foot minimum distance in the workplace and in any setting with other employees (e.g., breaks, lunch, walking on campus).

Travel to Campus: Employees are encouraged to use private transport instead of public transportation, when feasible, for commute to and around campus. If public transportation is necessary, wear a mask before entering the bus or train and avoid touching surfaces. Upon disembarking, wash hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers as soon as possible and before removing the face covering.

University Visitors: Any person who is not a USC employee or a student is prohibited from entering the campus until further notice to avoid a large density of people on campus.

Work Environment

Elevators and Stairs: Employees are encouraged to use the stairs inside campus buildings whenever possible. Most elevators should be limited to two occupants, and employees are required to wear a face mask while traveling alone or with other occupants. Avoid touching the elevator buttons with an exposed hand/fingers, if possible. Wash hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers upon departing the elevator. Those waiting for elevators in lobbies should practice appropriate physical distancing.

Hand Sanitizer and Tissue Availability: Supervisors should ensure that hand sanitizers and tissues are supplied to all on-site employee workspaces. If additional supplies are needed, please contact [USC Facilities Management Services](#).

Meals: While dining venues remain to-go only during Phases 2 and 3, employees are encouraged to take the food back to their office area or eat outside. If employees are eating in a work environment (e.g., break room, office), they must maintain a six-foot distance between others, not sit facing one another, and wipe all surfaces (e.g., table, refrigerator handle, coffee machine) after use in common areas.

Meetings: Where feasible, supervisors should encourage meetings be held in whole or in part using the extensive range of available collaboration tools (e.g., Zoom, telephone). In-person meetings may not exceed more than 10 persons in Phase 2 and 30 persons in Phase 3 and should allow for physical distancing of six feet between attendees. All attendees must wear a mask or face covering while sharing space in a common room. While on-site, employees should be encouraged to communicate via email, instant message, telephone, or other available technology rather than face-to-face.

Office Equipment: Supervisors should assign workspaces to employees on-site if they don't already have an assigned workspace. This will allow employees to use their own equipment while on campus (e.g., phones, keyboards, furniture). Workspaces should be situated at least six feet apart to comply with physical distancing guidelines. Employees should be encouraged to wipe down any surfaces in common areas (e.g., door handles, coffee machines, refrigerators, lab benches, desktops, computer switches, keyboards) before and after use. USC will be adopting stricter cleaning protocols throughout the day to help reduce the virus transmission.

Restrooms and Drinking Fountains/Bottle-Filling Stations: Employees should be mindful of the number of individuals inside a restroom and limit occupancy to allow for appropriate physical distancing. A six-foot distance must be maintained

while waiting for the drinking fountain/bottle-filling stations. Hands must be thoroughly washed after using the restroom and water fountains.

Workspaces: No more than one person should be in the same room unless the required six-foot distance can be consistently maintained. If more than one person is in a room, face coverings should always be worn. Face coverings should be worn by employees while in a reception/receiving area. Face coverings should be used when inside any USC facility where others are present, including walking in narrow hallways where others travel and in break rooms, conference rooms, and other meeting locations. When possible, employees should consider opening and keeping windows and office doors open for air circulation.

Any employees with instructional responsibilities must wear a face mask while in a classroom facility and ensure that their students also wear a face mask while in the space.

Travel

Travel for employees is limited to essential only during Phases 2 and 3. Any employees that need to request travel must obtain approval from dean and/or SVP.

For 14 days after travel, monitor yourself closely for symptoms of COVID-19 and strictly follow USC public health guidelines. Take extra precautions and consider being tested if you have engaged in higher risk activities such as travel to an area with high levels of COVID 19, attending a large social gathering, being in crowds, or travel on a boat.

Refusal to Comply with USC Guidelines

USC's guidelines are in place to comply with the direction of federal, state, and local authorities, and, more importantly, are in place for the health and safety of all on campus. Anyone who refuses to complete the required steps to ensure the health and safety of all will be asked to go home. Willful refusal to complete the necessary steps by a staff member will be treated as a performance or standard of conduct and would be adequate cause for discipline up to and including termination of employment. Willful refusal to complete the necessary steps by a faculty member will be regarded as neglect of duty and would be adequate cause for sanctions up to and including termination of appointment, under the processes set out in the Faculty Handbook.

To ensure we are following all mandates and operating in a safe manner, the following progressive actions are required for all employees. All supervisors are responsible for individuals reporting directly to them. Supervisors should contact an HR Partner for any questions related to the consequences (an accountability matrix [is available on the Manager Gateway](#)).

Any accommodation requests will be reviewed by University HR.

Non-compliance reporting process: Report concerns to the USC COVID-19 hotline at (213) 740-6291. Allow 2-5 days for the process outlined below:

Step 1 – Report taken and assigned

- Concerns are forwarded to the HR Service Center
- Case is created and routed to the central HR Triage team and Faculty/HR Partner

Step 2 – Fact-finding

- Local HR Partner gathers information and conducts fact-finding
- HR Triage team and Faculty/HR Partner review fact-finding

Step 3 – Triage/HR/Faculty Partner assessment

- HR Triage team meets to review/assess information
- HR Triage team renders a decision or submits recommendation to COVID-19 Safety Committee for review and sanctioning

Step 4 – COVID-19 Safety Committee review

- COVID-19 Safety Committee conducts a review and assessment of escalated, complex cases and determines sanction

Step 5 – Accountability

- Sanction determination is delivered to HR Triage team and Faculty/HR Partner for communication to the individual

Resources

[Trojan Check](#)

[USC COVID-19 Resource Center](#)

[USC Environmental Health and Safety Dept. COVID-19 Resource Page](#)

[CDC Hand-washing Recommendation](#)

[CDC COVID-19 Website](#)

[Center for Disease Control COVID-19 Guidance](#)

[County of Los Angeles Public Health COVID-19 Guidance](#)

[USC Leave of Absence Policies](#)

[USC HR Service Center](#)

[Childcare Services Information](#)

[Guidance on Requesting Accommodations due to COVID-19](#)

[TrojanLearn](#)

Reviewed by:

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