

Guidance to Reduce the Risk of COVID-19 Exposure to Personnel

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Revision history:

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| 23 March 2020 | Initial Release |
| 11 April 2020 | Removed language about foreign travel and simplified to just contact with infected person; added guidance for higher risk individuals; updated with CDC voluntary guidance (i.e. cloth face coverings) |

Background

COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly through close contact from person-to-person in respiratory droplets from someone who is infected. People who are infected often have symptoms of illness. According to the CDC, people who are infected may not show symptoms and could still spread the virus.

Fermilab has reduced the risk of exposure to COVID-19 by closing the campus to the public, restricting travel, instituting the work at home options and sick leave expectations, and cleaning frequently trafficked areas with recommended disinfectant. Fermilab's working environment is considered a Lower Exposure Risk (lowest of the levels of exposure risk) according to [OSHA's Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#). **Any worker may (without reprisal) decline to work on site if they feel unsafe due to the pandemic.**

Some people are at a higher risk for severe illness due to COVID-19, including older adults, people with chronic lung disease or asthma, people with HIV, people with serious heart conditions, people who are immunocompromised, people with severe obesity, people with diabetes, people with chronic kidney or liver disease.

Additionally, the CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings when in a public setting and an area of significant community-based transmission (such as northern Illinois and southwest South Dakota).

Requirements to reduce workplace exposure

1. If for any reason you don't feel well, stay at home, contact your supervisor and call your doctor if your symptoms worsen. Please do not come to Fermilab.
2. If you have come in close contact with a potential COVID-19 infected persons, please contact your supervisor and self-quarantine for 14 days.
3. Cover all sneezes and coughs, practice [Respiratory Etiquette](#).
4. Avoid touching your face with your hands.
5. Frequently wash your hands with soap and water (20+ seconds) or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (60%+ alcohol).
6. Limit face-to-face meetings, utilize Zoom, email, phone, etc. to collaborate.
7. Limit community used desks as much as possible and clean such consoles after each shift.
- 8. Maintain a social distance of at least 6 feet.**
 - a. Rethink work plans to prioritize social distancing or utilize barriers between workers.
 - b. Social distancing applies to vehicles as well. This may mean that smaller vehicles can only carry the driver. Wear nitrile gloves while operating shared vehicles.
 - c. If close-proximity work cannot be avoided (persons within 6 feet of each other), a Hazard Analysis must be developed detailing the appropriate controls to reduce the possible spread of infection for that work plan. This should include a combination of hand and face covers. Gloves, Tyvek coats/coveralls, face covering (e.g. personal cloth face covering or other filtering face mask and goggles and/or face shields) may be utilized.

Note: availability of personal protective equipment is limited. The lab is currently reserving filtering face masks for first responders and medical personnel. Please work with your supervisor and Division Safety Officer to determine appropriate controls for the task.

Please contact your Supervisor or your Division Safety Officer with any questions or concerns.

Guidance for higher risk individuals

Older adults and people of any age who have the underlying medical conditions listed below are at greater risk of severe illness due to COVID-19. However, this personal health information is not available to Fermilab supervisors and individuals at higher risk may have been identified as essential on-site personnel. There is no requirement to self-identify your personal health information to your supervisor, but any worker may (without reprisal) decline to work on site if they feel unsafe due to the pandemic.

The guidance below is provided by the CDC. Based on currently available information and clinical expertise, **older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions** might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19, including:

- people with chronic lung disease or asthma,
- people with HIV,
- people with serious heart conditions,
- people who are immunocompromised,
- people with severe obesity,
- people with diabetes,
- people with chronic kidney or liver disease

If you are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 because of your age or because you have an underlying medical condition, it is extra important for you to take actions to reduce your risk of getting sick with the disease.

- Stay home if possible.
- Wash your hands often.
- Keep your hands away from your face.
- Take everyday precautions to keep space between yourself and others (stay 6 feet away, which is about two arm lengths).
- Keep away from people who are sick.
- Stock up on supplies.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Avoid all cruise travel and non-essential air travel.

- Call your healthcare professional if you have concerns about COVID-19 and your underlying condition or if you are sick.

Voluntary use of cloth face coverings in public settings

CDC also advises the use of [simple cloth face coverings](#) in public settings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. **This is not a workplace requirement, but a voluntary measure when in public.**

Note: Currently Fermilab does not allow public access and is not considered a public space.

Additionally, when more people wear cloth face coverings in public, it increases social acceptance of this practice. When you are working (on-site or off), you are encouraged to (not required to) wear your personal cloth or other face covering. However, use of cloth face coverings is not a reason to stop [social distancing](#). The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance. Everyone still benefits from following all guidelines. Each action to prevent spread augments other actions.

More information on personal face coverings and do-it-yourself face coverings can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>