



Coronavirus Disease 2019

COVID-19

Guidance for Institutions of Higher Education
Issued June 22, 2020

This guidance provides information to Colorado postsecondary institutions implementing Executive Order D 2020 091 (Safer At Home and in the Vast, Great Outdoors), issued by Governor Polis on June 1, and Public Health Order 20-091 issued on June 18, 2020. Those orders together, as updated, allow many Coloradans to return to work and recreation while maintaining a sustainable level of social distancing. This guidance for higher education institutions, issued on June 22, replaces guidance that the Colorado Department of Higher Education issued on April 28, 2020.

In as much as Executive Order D 2020 091 encompasses all Colorado entities, this guidance is for all postsecondary institutions, irrespective of their authorizing agency. Those that are authorized by the Colorado Department of Higher Education include public institutions; private degree-granting and religious institutions authorized under §23-2-101 et seq.; and private occupational schools authorized under §23-64-101. Technical Colleges that are part of a school district should follow this guidance and guidance issued through the Colorado Department of Education. Postsecondary institutions not authorized through the Department of Higher Education should similarly follow this guidance as well as guidance from their authorizing entity. Institutions can contact the Colorado Department of Higher Education at COVID19@dhe.state.co.us for further information.

The Department will supplement this June 22 guidance with a more detailed “Considerations and Recommendations for Returning to Campus in the Fall” within several weeks.

Background

In response to the presence of coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) in Colorado, on March 25, the Governor issued Executive Order D 2020 017 ordering Coloradans to stay at home. Most institutions transitioned to remote instructional delivery and those on a traditional semester schedule instructed students not to return to campus for the remainder of the semester. On April 28, the Department issued updated guidance reflecting Public Health Order 20-28 permitting institutions to offer in-person instruction for less than 10 students per classroom in programs and courses that cannot be taught online. Institutions were required to inform CDHE, provide information on the course(s) to be taught, and attest to meeting all social distancing and other mitigation requirements. With the June 18, 2020 Public Health Order 20-091, institutions can resume face-to-face instruction. They must abide by the classroom limitations outlined in the public health order and further guidance below.

NOTE: This June 22 guidance will be supplemented by more extensive guidance for Fall Return to Campus.

Resume face-to-face instruction, with some limitations

Postsecondary institutions including private colleges and universities and private occupational schools may offer in-person instruction as of June 18, 2020 as follows:

- Classes are limited to 50% of the normal occupancy limit (per fire code or other posted limit) up to 50 individuals.
- For extra-large spaces (typically larger than 11,300 square feet and spaces for which the 50% capacity results in a number greater than 50 individuals), up to 100 individuals are allowed. Institutions should use the [Social Distancing Calculator](#) to help determine the space capacity. In such larger venues, the calculation utilizes greater social distancing to allow for more movement of individuals.
- In no case are indoor classrooms or venues permitted to have more than 100 individuals.
- Institutions are required to follow all social distancing and other mitigation requirements as outlined in state and local public health orders.
- Institutions must inform the Department of Higher Education of their intent to offer in-person instruction.
 - **Public, private degree granting institutions and any other postsecondary institutions other than those authorized by the Division of Private Occupational Schools (DPOS):** The Department no longer requires detailed information on each class an institution intends to offer nor detailed mitigation information. The Department will not provide authorization; rather the Department's purpose is to have information about in-person instruction on record in the case of a COVID outbreak in a county or region. Institutions are asked to send an email to COVID19@dhe.state.co.us with the following information:
 - 1) Name of institution and name/title of individual submitting information;
 - 2) The number of courses the institution intends to offer;
 - 3) The beginning dates of the in-person instruction; and
 - 4) The approximate total number of students the institution expects will attend the courses over the subsequent 30 days.If your institution has already informed the Department of in-person instruction under the requirements of the previous public health order, please send an email with any changes or updates.
 - **Private occupational schools authorized by the DPOS:** [Provide required information to the Division.](#)

Continue to monitor guidance from the [U.S. Department of Higher Education](#), [Higher Learning Commission](#) and other relevant organizations about how to deal with scenarios in which students are unable to complete their courses.

Continue to limit non-essential activities on campuses or in buildings

- Continue to provide food on a “Grab and Go” basis, discouraging individuals from congregating.
- Continue to provide services for students who remain on campus.
- Limit gatherings on campuses outside of classrooms to 10 individuals.
- Follow other state public health orders with regard to auxiliary services and programs including athletics. Contact CDHE at COVID19@dhe.state.co.us with questions.

Implement/Continue strict mitigation policies and practices

- Follow best practices outlined by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment with regard to COVID-19 mitigation strategies, including the following:
- Ensure 6 feet or more distancing between employees, students and visitors.
- Require the use of face coverings.
- Ensure that individuals at risk of severe illness from COVID-19 are able to work from home.
- Clean and disinfect all high-touch areas regularly.
- Implement a symptom monitoring protocol for all faculty, staff and students to ensure that individuals with symptoms stay at home.

Graduation Ceremonies

- Graduation ceremonies are permitted under the June 18 public health order. They must adhere to the Life Rites section of Public Health Order 20-091. That order specifies that:
 - Indoor ceremonies are allowed at 50% normal capacity not to exceed 50 individuals indoors or 100 individuals in extra large venues.
 - Outdoor ceremonies are allowed at up to the posted capacity number while still ensuring 6-foot distancing among non-family members.
 - Follow further guidance found [here](#).

Maintain Strict Travel Policies

- Continue to monitor the [CDC’s Travel Health Notices](#) to support students and staff with family in affected areas.
- Discourage students from traveling anywhere other than home.
- Restrict non-personal, out-of-state faculty and staff travel.
 - Prohibit out-of-state employee travel without approval by the head of the institution.
 - Discourage personal out-of-state travel.
 - Inform faculty, staff and students of requirements to self-isolate or quarantine if they travel.
 - <https://covid19.colorado.gov/isolation-and-quarantine>

Other Steps to Continue

- Continue to work closely with your local [public health agency](#). Make sure you know about local healthcare and public health emergency planning and response activities in your community and maintain open lines of communication.
- **Stay informed about the local COVID-19 situation.** Know where to turn for reliable, up-to-date information in your local community. Monitor the [Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment website](#), the [CDC COVID-19 website](#) and your local health agency websites for the latest information. The Colorado Department of Higher Education has created a [webpage](#) with these and other resources.
- **Communicate**
 - **Communicate about COVID-19 with your staff.** Share information about what is currently known about COVID-19. See the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment for updated messaging.
 - **Communicate about COVID-19 with students and families.** Provide updates about changes to your policies or operations. Use all communication channels that you have available including your email, university/college news, website, letters, and social media to share updates.
 - **Communicate with the Colorado Department of Higher Education** with any questions or concerns.
 - **Communication with the larger community and other impacted individuals.**
 - **Maintain up to date information on your institution's website regarding procedures for access health facilities on campus, if open.**
 - **Intentionally and persistently combat stigma.** Misinformation about coronavirus and COVID-19 creates fear and hostility that makes it harder to keep everyone healthy.

Testing for COVID-19

A faculty, staff member or student should be evaluated for COVID-19 if:

- If individuals have fever, cough or shortness of breath and have not been around anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, they should stay home.
- If an individual believes they have had close contact to someone with COVID-19 but are not currently sick, they should monitor their health for fever, cough, and shortness of breath during the 14 days after the last day they were in close contact with the sick person with COVID-19. They should avoid public places for 14 days. If the individual develops symptoms, they should call the school clinic or a local health provider. If your campus clinic sees a student who they believe might have COVID-19, the clinic should immediately notify your local public health agency. **Your local public health agency will provide you with guidance.**

If you Have a Confirmed Case

If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the community or at your campus:

- **Work in close collaboration and coordination with local and state health officials and other health care and public health partners in your community to make decisions regarding measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19.**

- **Communicate about potential exposure to COVID-19.** It is critical to maintain confidentiality of the individual while working to address potential fear and anxiety of students and staff.
 - Seek guidance from local health officials about the need to lengthen facility closures.