

COVID-19 Information for Employees and Supervisors

Updated January 2022

Given the elevated rate of transmission of COVID-19 and its variants in our community, Flathead Valley Community College is recommending that all individuals -- vaccinated or not -- wear face masks or coverings indoors on campus.

This recommendation aligns with [guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), which encourages face masks indoors in places with "substantial" or "high" transmission rates, such as Flathead County.

Face coverings can help slow the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 via droplets from sneezes, coughs or even talking over distances up to 6 feet. Since people can carry and spread the virus without showing any symptoms of it — or with very mild symptoms — wearing a face covering can help protect those around you and the community at large.

WORKPLACE

1. What do I do if I become ill, am exposed, or am required to quarantine or isolate?

Do not come to work if you are sick or have any type of symptoms. Please follow guidelines issued to you by your healthcare provider and [Flathead City-County Health department](#).

Contact your supervisor regarding your absence from work, and Human Resources if you need assistance with leave reporting. Use this [COVID-19 reporting form](#) to provide the College needed information to support you and protect others in our FVCC community.

2. Am I required to wear a face-covering while at work?

No, effective May 17, 2021, face coverings are no longer required on campus. However, given the elevated rate of transmission of COVID-19 and its variants in our community, Flathead Valley Community College is recommending that all individuals -- vaccinated or not -- wear face masks or coverings indoors on campus.

This recommendation aligns with [guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), which encourages face masks indoors in places with "substantial" or "high" transmission rates, such as Flathead County.

Consider wearing masks as a precaution when returning to campus from out-of-area travel, if you've recently attended a large event, or if there's a possibility you've been exposed to COVID-19. For these reasons, keep a mask available in case you need one or if someone requests that you wear one. Likewise, please respect the decisions of others to continue wearing masks if they choose to do so. They may be doing it to protect you!

The Student Health Center and other health care facilities may continue to require masks on their premises.

3. If people are not wearing a face covering, are we allowed to ask if they are fully vaccinated?

No, we are not able to request an individual's vaccination status per the [Governor's Executive Order 7-2021](#). Since we are unable to know who is vaccinated and who is not vaccinated, we must rely on the honor and integrity of individuals.

We encourage all members of our campus community to continue to take safety precautions, including continuing to wear face coverings, based on what is best for their health and personal or professional situations.

We acknowledge the honor system may not hold individuals accountable for wearing face coverings according to the CDC guidelines. We encourage all supervisors/instructors to review with their staff/students the CDC guidelines and definition of [fully vaccinated](#) to ensure everyone is fully informed of the college's expectations.

4. How do I have a conversation with someone I know is not vaccinated and is not wearing a mask?

The removal of face coverings nationally and at FVCC is based on people's honor and integrity, even if they have publically said at some point that they would not become vaccinated. Take an educational approach to express concern to them about not following CDC guidelines and putting their co-workers and students at risk.

FVCC does not require face coverings or vaccinations, so individuals are encouraged to continue to what is best for their health in these types of situations.

5. How is our new directive being communicated to guests that visit our campus?

This information will be available on the FVCC website and distributed through our newsletters. Additionally, employees working with guests, student groups, or venues should convey in advance the CDC recommendations for face coverings and have masks readily available.

Following is a sample script: *As a campus we are following CDC guidelines regarding face coverings to protect our campus community. Due to the high rate of transmission in our county, we are highly encouraging the use of masks in our indoor space. We will have some available for your use.*

6. Are face coverings still available?

Masks and shields are available at Student Services, Human Resources, and the COVID Support Specialist Offices.

7. What safety measures are being taken in the workplace?

If you work in an open environment, try to stay six feet from co-workers. Departments should assess open work environments and meeting rooms to institute measures to physically separate and increase the distance between employees, other co-workers, and visitors. The College encourages the continuation of virtual meetings for large groups.

8. What should I do if a co-worker is exhibiting designated symptoms of COVID comes into work?

We need to be sensitive and respectful toward the person who could feel singled out. Most of us are deeply committed to our work, and most likely this employee is not an exception. More significant, though, is our obligation to provide a safe environment for co-workers and students and to do our part in slowing the spread of the virus.

Employees who have symptoms of illness should stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F or greater), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants).

Actively encourage sick employees to stay home.

Identify whether you or the direct supervisor should discuss it with the employee. Promptly have a conversation in a confidential environment away from others. Let the employee know of concerns that he/she is ill, and request the employee to go home promptly.

The College, in alignment with CDC guidelines, is requesting people to stay home if they are ill. The employee may be reluctant to stay home due to a lack of leave accruals and the resulting negative financial impact. While this is a problematic situation, the employee must not be in the workplace for the safe working and learning environment of others. Please have him/her contact HR for available resources.

Supervisors should request employees to regularly check-in to determine when it might be advisable to return to campus.

Respect the employee's privacy and limit what is shared with others who may be curious.

9. What can I do to minimize risk in the workplace?

- Urge anyone who is sick to stay home.
- Try to find ways to give people more physical space (social distancing) so that they aren't in close contact as much as possible.
- Discourage employees from using other employee's phones, desks, pens, keyboards, or other items, when possible.
- Encourage employees to maintain good health habits, such as frequent hand washing.
- Clean surfaces with standard cleaners.

10. How will I be informed if FVCC is closed?

Employees and students will be notified of closure through the E2 alert system.

The [Human Resources website](#) will be updated with further information for employees regarding the closure. Public and student information will be available on the [FVCC website](#).

11. How will I be informed if someone on campus tests positive?

If it affects your department or you, a member of the COVID Quick Response Team (CQRT) will be in contact with information. The individual with COVID-19 will not be named due to medical confidentiality and should be afforded privacy. Please note, due to the caseload the Flathead City-County Health Department may not be able to contact all individuals named as close contacts to a positive COVID-19 case. The FVCC COVID Support Specialist, Cary Gronvold, conducts contact tracing on the FVCC campus in partnership with health departments.

12. Who needs to quarantine?

Quarantine if you have been in [close contact](#) (within 6 feet of someone for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with someone who has COVID-19, unless you have been [fully vaccinated](#). People who are fully vaccinated do NOT need to quarantine after contact with someone who had COVID-19 unless they have [symptoms](#). However, fully vaccinated people should get tested 3-5 days after their exposure, even if they don't have symptoms and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.

13. Who counts as close contact?

Someone who was within [6 feet of an infected person](#) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, *three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes*). An infected person is contagious starting from 2 days before they have any symptoms (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days before the positive specimen collection date), until they meet criteria for [discontinuing home isolation](#).

14. If FVCC facilities are closed due to an outbreak, will employees be paid?

If College facilities are required to be closed, FVCC will continue to operate remotely through telework and distance learning. Most employees now have the ability to telework. To keep the College operational, other employees may use their leave accruals or request special considerations for alternative work.

15. May I take down my Plexiglas barrier?

Plexiglass barriers will remain up through the spring semester to ensure a safe working and learning environment.

EVENTS

16. Is there updated event or meeting guidance?

Internal and External Events are allowed on campus currently, so our focus shifts to the education of best practices for safety.

Internal and external event sponsors must inform attendees that given the elevated rate of transmission of COVID-19 and its variants in our community, Flathead Valley Community College is recommending that all individuals -- vaccinated or not -- wear face masks or coverings indoors on campus.

Masks and sanitizer must be readily accessible at all events.

It is highly recommended that events be held outdoors as feasible to reduce the risk of transmission, and food and beverages should be available on a grab-and-go basis, and eating outside is highly recommended.

17. Is there updated guidance for FVCC internal meetings?

Department meetings may now be held in-person with COVID safety guidelines still in place. However, it would be best for large group meetings continue to occur via technology until the county has no longer in a high transmission rate.

Meetings should be held outdoors as much as feasible to reduce the risk of transmission. Food and beverages should be available on a grab-and-go basis, and eating outside is highly recommended.

The President may grant event exceptions in consultation with COVID QRT.

TRAVEL

18. **NEW January 2022!** What are the current travel guidelines?

Employee Travel (travel that culminates in an event or mileage claim)

- Employees may travel in the United States. However, supervisors and employees should make contingency plans in the event illness occurs during or after travel.
- Face coverings are highly encouraged to be worn when traveling.
- The use of larger capacity vehicles is encouraged when multiple individuals travel together.
- Employees are encouraged to continue to use virtual conferences and workshops in lieu of in-person events.
- While there are no longer COVID restrictions on travel, all requests should meet the following guidelines:
 - Registration fees should be changeable or refundable
 - Travel fees should be changeable or refundable
 - Employees must obtain supervisor approval prior to registration and travel arrangements. Supervisors may deny or request changes for travel.

Group Student Travel Recommendation

- Continue with current practices of transporting students using a larger capacity bus with maintaining COVID physical distance guidelines and protocol.
- Face coverings are highly encouraged to be worn
- Athletes are highly encouraged to take advantage of the vaccine and practice safety measures during practices.
- While there are no longer COVID restrictions on travel, all requests must still meet the following guidelines:
 - Registration fees should be changeable or refundable
 - Travel fees should be changeable or refundable
 - Students must obtain faculty/advisor/ approval prior to registration and travel arrangements. A faculty member/advisor may deny or request changes for travel.

19. I have personal travel plans. Could that impact my work?

You should notify your supervisor of personal travel plans solely for awareness purposes and be fully informed of [CDC travel resources and advisories](#). Additionally, faculty and staff should be aware the conditions could change at any time, and quarantining after travel is not required at this time. Phase status could change quickly though, so you should plan accordingly. In the event of this type of absence, employee leave accruals must be used and reported.

TIME OFF FROM WORK

20. If I'm not feeling well, how do I know whether to stay home? What if a family member is ill?

If you are not feeling well, please stay home. Paid sick leave is available for use by most employees during these circumstances. It is also available if you need to stay home to care for an immediate family member who is not feeling well. Please notify your direct supervisor as soon as possible and make sure that the time away is accounted for/recorded in [Paycor](#).

21. What is my FVCC employee paid sick leave benefit?

The College's paid sick leave benefit complies with Montana Code Annotated 2-18-618 for eligible employees. Sick leave credits are earned at the rate of 12 working days for each year of service without restriction as to the number of sick days that may be accumulated. Eligible employees are not entitled to be paid sick leave until they have been continuously employed 90 days.

22. How many hours of sick leave have I accrued?

Your current sick leave hours are accessible in [Paycor](#). Select Me > Time and Attendance > Benefits. Scroll to the bottom of the screen to find your current balance.

23. I am not on direct deposit. Will my check be mailed to me if the College is closed?

If the College or other national services are under Stay-at-Home or other orders, mailed payroll checks may experience delays. To ensure timely delivery of your pay, employees are highly encouraged to elect direct deposit. This can be completed online by going to your Paycor account, *Me > Profile Summary > Compensation > Direct Deposit*.

BENEFITS

24. How is COVID-19 testing covered for participants of the MUS health plan?

Testing and treatment for COVID-19 are available under the regular terms of the Medical Plan.

25. Are there telehealth services available?

For BlueCross/Blue Shield insurance participants, a 24/7 Nurseline is staffed by registered nurses who are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at 1-877-213-2565. The 24/7 Nurseline can help answer your health questions, day or night.

26. Is there mental health support available?

[Employee Assistance Plan \(EAP\)](#) benefits are available to all employees and their families at no cost. The EAP provides a wide range of services including 24-hour crisis help, in-person counseling as well as access to online consultations with licensed counselors.

27. Where can I get a COVID vaccine?

Vaccines are widely available in our community at [VaccineFinder](#).

WORK FROM HOME

28. Can I work from home?

Telework arrangements may be made based on a department-level evaluation of the position and the employee. Some positions may lend themselves to remote work, while others do not.

Certain jobs may be defined as teleworking supportive, but 100% telework for any position is not encouraged due to the College's mission of serving students and emphasizing building connections and community.

Employees must request authorization from their supervisors to work from home. Not all roles lend themselves to work from home, so communication with supervisors is key. If approved, the arrangement is only intended as a temporary measure. A supervisor will consider a number of factors, including:

- The nature of the work performed;
- The service needs of the College;
- Whether your position is classified as exempt or nonexempt (eligible for overtime pay);
- The feasibility of using the home environment for work; and
- Whether campus health and safety or the health and safety of the employee is at risk.

29. I have a health condition, and I am concerned about coming to work. What can I do?

It is recommended that employees with specific health concerns contact their healthcare provider for medical advice tailored to their individual situations. Employees should contact Human Resources for more information on policy, ADA accommodation, and teleworking.

30. What if I have someone in my household in an ‘at-risk’ group, can I work from home?

The ADA only covers the employee for accommodation, so household members’ health cannot be considered in an accommodation request.

31. If I need to stay home to care for myself or a family member, can I also do work and not use my sick leave?

The priority in any situation requiring sick leave is to attend to your own or a family member’s needs. This time should be accounted for through the utilization of leave accruals. In most cases, this means that working from home while providing care for others would not be feasible.

32. How do I access my work phone messages remotely?

Call 756-3377, enter your extension #, and then enter your password.

33. How do I set up a temporary phone greeting?

Go to your voicemail, press 82, choose option 3, and follow prompts.

SUPERVISORS

34. May I ask my employee to go home if they have any COVID-19 symptoms?

Supervisors may ask employees who report feeling ill at work, or call in sick, if they have any [COVID-19 symptoms](#) in order to determine if they should be in the workplace. The supervisor’s discussion about the employee’s health should be limited to asking only about COVID-19 symptoms

- Fever > 100.4 F
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Loss of smell or taste
- Shortness of breath
- Runny nose
- Chills or shaking
- Muscle or chest pain
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- Fatigue
- Headache

Supervisors should regularly remind employees reporting to work on campus that should stay home if they are sick or have [COVID-19 symptoms](#). If an employee does report to work and is exhibiting symptoms,

supervisors may require employees to leave the workplace. Supervisors can guide employees by explaining when they can appropriately use sick leave and request that they complete the COVID reporting form on the HR home page. Supervisors may not mandate that an employee stay away from work because the employee disclosed, or the supervisor is aware of, a medical condition unrelated to COVID-19. Supervisors shall not inquire about underlying medical conditions. Inquiries about reasonable accommodations should be directed to Human Resources at HR@fvcc.edu.

If an employee who has concerns about returning to work due to a medical condition or other factors that place them at a higher risk from COVID-19, or if individuals wish to seek ADA reasonable accommodations related to returning to the workplace, they should contact Human Resources who will work with them to determine appropriate accommodation(s).

35. What if schools or childcare facilities close due to COVID-19?

Discuss your options with your supervisor to see if teleworking, flexible work arrangements, or using vacation accruals will fit your situation.

Employees voluntarily choosing remote instruction for their children should work with their supervisor to determine if their work can temporarily be conducted via telework, alternative scheduling, or a reduced FTE. Utilization of time spent on childcare during scheduled work hours should be accounted for through leave accruals.

36. What do I do if an employee in my department is diagnosed with COVID-19?

Request that the employee complete the COVID reporting form on the HR home page. The COVID QRT members will assist the employee with resources, evaluate sanitization measures, and conduct FVCC contact tracing.

As the supervisor, please email COVID@fvcc.edu to reinforce the reporting, in case the employee does not complete the form. A COVID team member will contact you regarding communication, sanitization, and to address any questions

37. What should I do if I find out several days later, after an employee worked, that they were diagnosed with COVID-19?

Since there are many variables in work environments, the COVID team will provide you individualized direction for your specific situation. Please contact them at COVID@fvcc.edu and a member will contact you promptly. It is important to share this information as quickly as feasible in order to address it in a timely manner.

Employees named as close contacts should follow instructions from the health department/FVCC COVID Specialist.

38. When can a sick employee return to work?

This may vary based upon a variety of factors such as vaccination status. An employee must provide a release to work or be cleared by the COVID Team to return to the workplace.

39. What do I do if an employee is aware that they have been in close contact with someone with a positive COVID-19 diagnosis?

FVCC will rely on City-County Health Departments to notify individuals regarding COVID-19 exposure off our college campuses. All employees are highly encouraged always to wear masks, maintain physical

distances, and utilize good hygiene to minimize risk in the workplace. A supervisor may choose to allow the employee to telework if feasible during this timeframe.

40. Can I get masks to hand out to students or public?

The College does have masks available for students, prospective students, and public on campus. These may be obtained from Student Services, Human Resources, or the COVID Support Specialist.

QUESTIONS

41. Who do I contact if I have other questions or feedback?

Contact the COVID Quick Response Team at COVID@fvcc.edu.