Physical Distancing Guidelines

This document outlines the principles and instructions to be followed regarding physical distancing at SFU to ensure an orderly and safe return to on-campus activities. The information below is based on current guidance at May 19, 2020. Any new guidance made available by health or WorkSafeBC will be reflected in updates to this document.

General
• All individuals are required to keep 2 metres (or 6 feet) apart from one another in each campus space wherever possible.
• As duration spent in an enclosed space may also play a role with the transmission of the virus, it is suggested that individuals take occasional breaks from work or study environments to maximize exposure to fresh air, and attempt to keep interactions with others brief when feasible.
• Unused interior spaces should be kept locked to minimize the potential for contamination and the need for cleaning.

Communication
• Physical posters and digital messaging shall be used to remind individuals to maintain 2m distance from one another.
• Physical distancing graphics and signage (e.g. maximum occupancy, lunchroom guidelines, etc.), and floor decals, as identified within these guidelines will be made available for departments to download or order through Document Solutions.

Workspaces
• Work that can be conducted remotely should continue as such in accordance with direction from supervisors to minimize physical interactions on campus.
• When work cannot be performed remotely, supervisors need to consider creating staggered or alternating shifts to minimize the number of individuals in an area at any one time to reduce the risk of exposure. The use of cohorts of workers who work together and who do not interact with other cohorts can also be considered.
• Create work arrangements to position individuals at least 2m apart from one another and from communal pathways, where no physical barriers are in place. Avoid side-by-side seating at adjacent computers, at adjacent fume hoods or on the same bench; avoid activities that require multiple persons to operate or handle equipment at the same time.
• Minimize sharing workstations. If individuals must share work stations integrate these locations into cleaning and hygiene protocols, ensuring that frequently-touched surfaces are addressed such as the computer keyboard and mouse, desk surface, and telephone. [Please refer to the Cleaning & Disinfection guidelines for details].
• However, even with all the workplace rearrangements there may still be a few tasks where individuals may need to be in close proximity to another person. These encroachments on physical distancing should be kept as brief as possible, through planning the work task and providing instructions to individuals.

Meetings
• Most meetings should be able to occur using videoconferencing and other remote means. If individuals need to meet in person within their office or elsewhere, 2m space separation between each individual needs to be maintained. Avoid meetings or gatherings where physical distances cannot be maintained.
• Consider having all or some attendees attend virtually, using larger rooms, or moving meetings outside.
• Eliminate hand-to-hand contact between individuals (handshakes, fist bumps, high-fives, etc.).
• Individually-packaged catered meals and single-use drinks are acceptable however open food buffets are not permitted. Use of self-service amenities such as beverage (coffee/tea/water) dispensers could be used if properly cleaned after each use.

Common areas in shared buildings
• Facilities Services is responsible for safety (cleaning, signage) in common areas of shared buildings. Local Health & Safety Committees may be engaged to provide assistance and guidance.

Public areas (NOTE: campus public areas remain closed at extreme and high recovery phases)
• Seating within learning spaces, study spaces, dining areas and computer labs needs to be configured to maintain 2m separation between seated individuals. This may require that certain seats being taped off or removed. Accessible seats need to be provided.
• Place distance markers, floor decals or tape to mark off areas where individuals can and cannot walk. Consider installing distance markers outside of area to allow for queuing to provide physical distancing inside the space.
• Manage the flow of people in busy public spaces such as hallways, stairwells, washrooms, in lab bays, etc. by using one-way directional signage and/or stanchions, where appropriate to maximize physical distancing.
• Where multiple entrance-exits exist in a space, consider restricting passage using one-way directional signage (other than for emergency exiting situations).

Lunchrooms (NOTE: lunchrooms remain closed at extreme and high recovery phases)
• Individuals are to be encouraged to take breaks and lunch outdoors, in their office or personal workspace, or in other areas where proper physical distancing is feasible.
• Lunchroom seating should be configured to provide the 2m physical distancing requirement.
• Communal beverage (coffee, tea) equipment can be used if properly cleaned after each use.
• Handwashing soap, and cleaning and disinfectant supplies should be present
• Refrain from providing and consuming communal foods.
• Individuals should bring their own dishes and utensils.
• Allow communal doors to remain open throughout the workday to reduce contact with door handles.
• Remove non-essential communal items, such as candy, magazines, and complimentary phone chargers.

Elevators
• Elevators are to be limited to 1 individual at a time. Able-bodied individuals are to be encouraged to use stairwells rather than elevators to free-up elevators for individuals with accessibility needs.
• Place distance markers, decals or tape on the ground to indicate where individuals should stand while lining up to enter the elevator. Ensure adequate space is provided for those exiting the elevator.

Washrooms
• Unless protected by a physical partition, 2m separation between individuals within washrooms facilities needs to respected where feasible. To maximize physical separation, a certain number of adjacent equipment such as sinks, may need to be taken out of service.

Use of SFU vehicles
• If individuals need to use University vehicles, they should travel alone in order to practice physical distancing.
• Place disinfecting wipes and alcohol-based hand sanitizers in vehicles. [please refer to Cleaning & Disinfection guidelines]

Deliveries
• Minimize interactions between personnel and outside visitors, contractors, delivery personnel or truck drivers.
• Adjust practices for proof of delivery so that in-person signatures are avoided and online confirmation of receipt of package can be used instead.

Maximum Occupancy
• No single gathering or event of more than 50 people is permitted in any space or area at any time. This prohibition on gatherings of greater than 50 people refers to “one-time or episodic events” (festivals, public gatherings, etc.) and is not intended to apply to buildings where the environment allows for distance between people such as in workplaces or libraries.
• Each common space or area is required to have a maximum occupancy limit established to provide for physical distancing, with signage posted on the entrance doors. Spaces include: classrooms, theatres, labs, meeting rooms, dining areas, study spaces, atriums, lunchrooms, locker rooms, washrooms, elevators and outdoor gathering areas.

• Each department is responsible to establish and post maximum occupancies for their respective spaces. Spaces, areas, or laboratories that are shared by multiple departments will need coordinated assessment to ensure that the maximum occupancy considers the entire space, not just the portion assigned to a particular department or individual. Facilities Services, working with MECS and Student Services, shall be responsible to calculate maximum occupancy and post signage for all common spaces including Registrar-controlled classrooms. Standard signage will be provided.

• For Research space, it is the responsibility of the facility/lab manager or, otherwise, the PI, to ensure that maximum occupancy is not exceeded.

• The determination of maximum occupancy shall be based upon*:
  a) the principle that each person requires approximately 5 square meters of unencumbered floor space to maintain physical distance.
  b) this unencumbered space would be floor space minus floor space used for equipment such as tables, benches, and fume hoods, etc.
  c) the workflow of activities to ensure interactions between persons are minimized
  d) any other considerations unique to the space, including a practical assessment of whether the maximum occupancy calculate can reasonably achieve the 2m separation of people throughout the operating hours of the space

*Take, for example, a space with 200 square metres of floor space with 70 square metres of equipment/displays. The space has 200 square metres minus 70 square metres = 130 square metres of unencumbered floor space for individuals. The maximum number of people allowed in the space to support physical distancing would be: (130 square metres) / (5 square metres/person) = 26 people.

Where Physical Distance cannot be maintained
• Where distance cannot be maintained, including at service or check-out counters, consider separating people with partitions or plexiglass barriers. Where physical installation of barriers is desirable, please submit a Facilities Request through Facilities Services. Where no installation is required, departments may procure barriers independently. Shortage of materials may delay the procurement process.

• Although the use of Personal Protective Equipment (e.g. gloves, shields, etc.) including non-medical masks are not a substitute for physical distancing measures, they may be considered as a last option if there are no other
administrative or engineering controls available to maintain physical distance. [Please refer to the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) guidelines for details].