

# COVID-19 CONSTRUCTION GUIDELINE

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UNIVERSITY OF  
TORONTO

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# 1 | INTRODUCTION

**As government regulation and public health advice continue to evolve, the University is looking ahead to resuming operations of construction activities that were closed or operating with reduced occupancy due to COVID-19.**

In so doing, the health and safety of the University community must be a priority and appropriate measures put in place. Such measures will take into account factors including legal obligations, public health advice, and operational considerations. The University will need to put in place measures to protect the health and safety of its faculty, staff, students, contractors and other members of the U of T community, and to provide reassurance to community members who may have concerns about COVID-19 transmission. This guideline outlines strategies for making construction activities ready for re-opening or increased occupancy, and for addressing the needs of employees and others who will be returning to the workplace.

This guideline is also a consolidation of various tools/resources from the University and other public health authorities that will be useful during resuming of construction activities. For general re-opening guidance, which applies to non-construction activities including maintenance work conducted by University employees, please refer to the [General Workplace Guideline](#).

The strategies and best practices set out in this guideline are only to be applied by areas of the University's operations that have been given approval to re-open onsite by the University, through its processes in place from time to time. Such approval is necessary to ensure continued institutional compliance with legal obligations and public health advice

In this document, contractors are defined as companies that are hired by the University for construction activities on University premises. Contractors are responsible for the health and safety of their employees and their worksites. A constructor is the prime contractor of a construction project and has overall responsibility for the health and safety of all employees, subcontractors, sub-trades and personnel in the project under their control.

Contractors' activities on university common areas (e.g. access, loading dock, public spaces) must be coordinated with the University Project Contact Person (UPCP). If a University community member has any health and safety concerns about work conducted by contractors, they must immediately report such concerns to the UPCP and/or to Campus Police as applicable and appropriate. The UPCP may consult their local Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) office or reach out to EHS at <mailto:ehs.office@utoronto.ca> for advice on resolving construction-related health and safety issues.

## SCOPE

This guideline applies to all areas of the University that engage in construction projects in buildings/areas owned, occupied or operated by the University of Toronto at all campuses and other off-campus locations, such as Capital Projects, Utilities and Building Operations, Property Management, UTM Facilities Management & Planning, UTSC Facilities Management and Design & Construction Management. This guideline works in conjunction with the University's COVID-19 General Workplace Guideline (the "General Guideline").

All measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 should be in compliance with requirements under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and its Regulations, the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act and its Regulations, and public health directives issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

The University will provide this guideline to all construction contractors working on premises owned, occupied, or operated by the University to inform contractors of the University's expectations. All measures taken by any individual contractor also need to consider the broader context, including physical locations, in which the construction activities operate.

# 2 | RESPONSIBILITIES

## Contractors:

- **Must complete the [COVID-19 Contractor/Externals Safety Acknowledgement Form](#) prior to the commencement of project/work at the University.**
- Are responsible for the health and safety of their employees and worksites. A constructor is the prime contractor of a construction project and has overall responsibility for the health and safety of all employees, subcontractors, sub-trades and personnel in the project under their control.
- Must be familiar with and operate the business in compliance with this University Construction Guideline, public health directives (e.g. including advice, recommendations and instructions of public health officials), applicable legislation and provincial guideline and publications of provincial health and safety associations (e.g. construction sector-specific COVID-19 guideline, IHSA), including, but not limited to the relevant links provided in the [Ontario Resources to Prevent COVID-19 in the Workplace webpage](#).
- Must advise the University Project Contact Person immediately of any health and safety hazards that may impact the University community arising from or that may arise from the project, and work with the University as appropriate in the circumstances to implement control measures.
- Must immediately notify the UPCP of an individual who is or has been on UofT premises who is confirmed to have been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Must ensure that all vendors contracted by them to provide goods/services to the project who must access the site prior to turnover are fully aware of, and abide by, applicable site health and safety procedures. Must ensure vendors, sub-contractors complete the [COVID-19 Contractor/Externals Safety Acknowledgement Form](#).

## University Project Contact Person (UPCP)

- Functions as the primary contact for the contractor for all health and safety issues or concerns, including ones related to COVID-19, that may arise during the term of the construction contract with the University.
- Must advise contractors engaged by the University of specific hazards at the

University that may apply to their construction projects.

- Assists in ensuring that for health and safety plans upon resuming construction project are shared with all University parties who may enter the construction site.
- Ensures that all vendors contracted by the University to provide goods/services to the project who must access the site prior to turnover, are fully informed and aware of, and abide by, applicable site health and safety procedures as.
- **Must ensure contractors, vendors and subcontractors complete the [COVID-19 Contractor/Externals Safety Acknowledgement Form](#) to submit to the UPCP.**
- With respect to projects for which they are the main contact person, must immediately notify the University Occupational Health Nurse of any individual associated with the construction project(s) who is or has been on UofT premises who is confirmed to have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and ensure the contractor employee emails [ehs.office@utoronto.ca](mailto:ehs.office@utoronto.ca) as soon as possible.
- Should direct all contractor requests for University related COVID-19 information to the local EHS office or contact [ehs.office@utoronto.ca](mailto:ehs.office@utoronto.ca).

#### **University Capital Projects, Construction Management, Facilities Management Departments:**

- Review this guideline with appropriate stakeholders related to building operations and infrastructure
- When engaging contractors, ensure that they are aware of any procedures for health and safety applicable to the areas they will access for their construction projects.
- Work with contractors and University Project Contacts to ensure proper physical separation between projects (*and in the event of concurrent projects in the same space, also ensure separation between projects*) and the University community, in order to minimize risk to the University community (e.g. circulation pathways to maintain physical distancing).
- Work with contractors to implement applicable controls in common/shared areas in buildings (e.g. stairwells, elevators and lobbies)
- Ensure University workers are provided with appropriate communications/instructions/training on applicable health and safety procedures upon re-opening.
- Provide any equipment, including personal protective equipment (PPE), that

is part of a health and safety plan upon re-opening to applicable University employees. Please refer to the General Workplace Guideline for more information.

- Provide any instructions or other resources necessary to implement a health and safety plan to applicable employees. Please refer to the General Workplace Guideline for more information.
- Must immediately notify the University Occupational Health Nurse of any individual in their department confirmed to have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or any employee probable case.

#### **Environmental Health and Safety (EHS):**

- Responsible for developing and reviewing this guideline in consultation with appropriate stakeholders
- Will periodically update this guideline based on the evolving COVID-19 situation, legislation and public health directives
- Occupational Health Nurse manages all cases of individuals who are confirmed to have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and associated risks at the University. For any related queries, please contact [ohs.occhealth@utoronto.ca](mailto:ohs.occhealth@utoronto.ca).

#### **Divisional Client Contact (DCC):**

- Ensure that the University Project Contact Person is provided timely communication regarding any and all vendors contracted by the DCC to provide goods/services to the project who must access the site prior to turnover.
- Ensure all vendors contracted by the client/division are fully informed and aware of applicable site health and safety procedures. **Must ensure contractors, vendors and subcontractors hired directly by the client/division complete the [COVID-19 Contractor/Externals Safety Acknowledgement Form](#).**

# 3

# CONTROLS TO REDUCE THE RISK OF TRANSMISSION

To control the risk of transmission to workers/members of the University community, University departments and contractors must implement the University Construction Guideline, public health directives, applicable legislation and provincial (IHSA) construction sector specific COVID-19 guidance (including but not limited to the relevant links provided in the [Ontario Resources to Prevent COVID-19 in the Workplace webpage](#)).

Regarding PPE requirements onsite, contractors (e.g. external project contacts) should refer to and follow public health/governmental directives and guideline as applicable and appropriate. For University employees, PPE requirements are discussed in the University General Workplace Guideline and provided by the University department.

## Communications/Instructions

For projects that may impact the University Community, it is important to develop a health and safety plan applicable to the operations of any construction project and communicate this plan to the applicable members of the University community. The communication strategy will vary depending on the business unit but here are some suggestions/recommendations:

- Communications may take the form of memos, emails and meetings (applying physical distancing).
- In addition to workers in the unit, consider communications with event organizers, organizations and other departments that you work with routinely.
- Update your website, email signature with instructions on new procedures.
- Update procedures for scheduling appointments. Signage to remind workers and to inform the University community.
- For high traffic flow areas, consider providing a resource in the area to explain procedures for that area and direct visitors.
- Communications may need to occur more than once. The procedures may need to be adjusted over time, for example as restrictions continue to lift, and re-communicated to relevant parties.

## Procedures in the Event of a Confirmed Contractor COVID-19 Case

In order for the University to ensure the safety of its community, any contractor who has an employee(s) working at the University who tests positive for COVID-19 must immediately report this result to the University Project Contact Person. The UPCP will inform the University Occupational Health Nurse and ensure the contractor employee emails [ehs.occhealth@utoronto.ca](mailto:ehs.occhealth@utoronto.ca) as soon as possible. For procedures on reporting a University employee COVID-19 case, please refer to the General Workplace Guideline.

Out of respect for the privacy of individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19, please ensure all related communications only include the UPCP and the Occupational Health Nurse. **For University messaging around these issues, please refer to the COVID-19 General Workplace Guideline.**

The contractor is responsible for risk assessment, isolating/securing and adequately cleaning/disinfecting all contaminated areas related to their construction activities in accordance with applicable legislation, sector-specific guideline and public health directives. Site-specific cleaning/disinfecting expectations should be confirmed through the UPCP.

# A | APPENDIX A: RESOURCES FOR COVID-19

For the latest information about U of T's COVID-19 response, please see the [University's Coronavirus page](#). Please take the time to review our [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) and the [Human Resources & Equity page on COVID-19](#). If you or members of your unit have a question that is not covered, please consider using the [Contact Us](#) button located at the top of the FAQ section to submit your question.

Provincial Guidelines and Publications of Provincial Health and Safety Associations (Construction specific COVID-19 documents) can be found on the [Ontario Resources to Prevent COVID-19 in the Workplace webpage](#).

University of Toronto [COVID-19 Contractor/Externals Safety Acknowledgement Form](#).