EATING SPACE GUIDELINES FOR COVID-19 PREVENTION

Providing designated eating spaces for those who must work or study on site at a University location is important to help prevent COVID-19 transmission. Eating and drinking, as unmasked activities, present one of the higher exposure risks at school and work. University units should implement the following COVID-19 prevention practices when establishing and maintaining a safe eating space.

**DESIGNATING AND PREPARING AN EATING SPACE**

- Choose a clearly definable space for eating and drinking, ideally with a closeable door and/or separate from other working spaces.
- Select a well-ventilated area or room for the designated eating space. See the [HVAC FAQ](#) for more details.
- Designate an occupancy limit for this space. Review occupancy limits with EH&S based on square footage per person. Note that a 6-foot minimum distance must be maintained by all users at all times.
- Post signage detailing expectations for the use of the space, including occupancy limits.
- Designate a time limit for use of the eating space. This allows others to rotate through and have time to eat safely. A 30-minute time limit is suggested.
- Stagger breaks or use scheduling/sign-up tools to help ensure the occupancy limit is not exceeded.
- Place furniture at least 6 feet apart. Remove excess furniture to discourage congregating.
- Avoid shared self-serve food (e.g., coffee and snack bars).
- Provide cleaning/decontaminating supplies to clean surfaces before and after use, with signage reminding people to clean after eating.
- If the eating area does not have a sink, make hand sanitizer available.

**MAINTAINING & MONITORING USE OF EATING SPACES**

Actively monitor the spaces to ensure users:

- Avoid eating in groups whenever possible.
- Maintain at least 6 feet of distance between people while using the space, especially while unmasked and eating. Facilitate distancing with spaced out furniture or use tape/marks/signage to mark useable seats.
- Do not share food or drink. Communal food is not safe at this time.
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces daily (e.g., table tops, refrigerator handles, microwaves, etc.), and encourage users to clean and disinfect surfaces before and after use.
- Remove shared utensils from the breakroom. All users should be prepared with their own dishes and utensils, unless disposables are provided.
- Only remove masks while actively eating and drinking. Users should remain masked while preparing or reheating food, and moving throughout the space.

This guidance is intended for informal workplace and non-food service eating areas. University-permitted food establishments and eating spaces in residence halls should follow their established practices as approved/recommended by EH&S.

Contact EH&S at 206.543.7262 or ehsdept@uw.edu for more information.