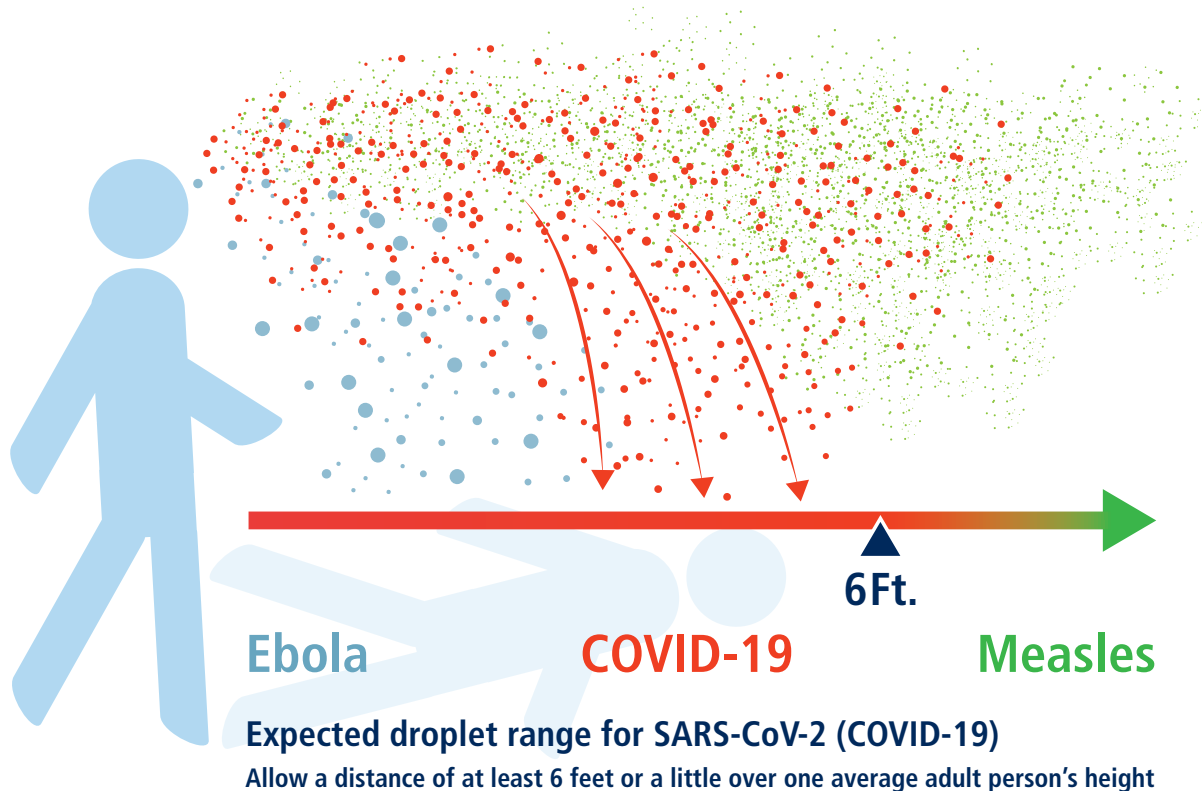


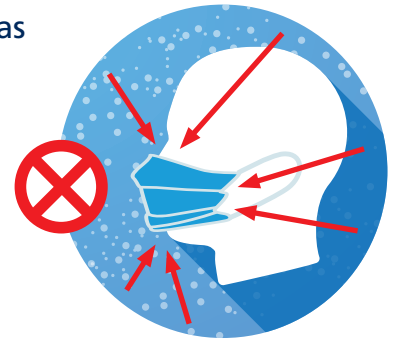
# COVID-19 Pandemic Workplace Guidance

The following procedures are based in sound scientific practice to avoid the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. They are provided as a best practice process to be used as a starting point for workplaces during the current pandemic. They also align with Maine's statewide checklists for safety and transmission reduction. **While the risk of transmission will never be zero, these practices will reduce viral spread.**



- SARS-CoV-2 is spread even by individuals who are pre-symptomatic, asymptomatic, or may never exhibit classic symptoms like fever. Therefore, **symptom checks like temperature taking have been shown to miss more than 50% of COVID cases**, and the best procedures involve proactive precautions by assuming that you may be infected, and others around you may be infected. The incubation period of SARS-CoV-2 is 2–14 days (median of 5 days), with highest viral shedding up to a couple of days prior to symptom onset. Therefore, people are highly contagious before exhibiting any symptoms.
- Maintain social distancing outside of your workplace; if someone has a known interaction with a COVID+ patient, or if you are symptomatic based on the CDC list of symptoms or doctor diagnosis, **you must report to supervisor and isolate/quarantine** prior to return (the 14-day quarantine is based on the incubation period for this virus).
- **Physical distancing of at least 6 feet in workplaces at all times** to avoid droplet spread of SARS-CoV-2 (such as from cough, sneeze, close breathing or close talking).

- Use proper PPE (N95 masks, face shields, etc), or face coverings such as cloth masks, especially when around others and unable to maintain distancing. This reduces droplet/aerosol transmission. Cloth masks are preferable now; PPE supplies should be conserved for healthcare workers. Be mindful that surgical masks not providing a tight seal around nose and mouth are not a good barrier.
- Avoid touching your face (virus particles gain entry via mouth, nose, eyes), no hugging/touching other people, use elbow/tissue to cough or sneeze.
- Follow CDC/WHO handwashing procedures (use posted signage), provide hand sanitizer (60%–70% EtOH) when needed (especially when not near a sink). Handwashing with soap for at least 20 seconds is more effective at killing virus than hand sanitizer.



- Stagger work schedules to limit number of people in a given work space at one time, continue any work remotely when possible, continue meetings and events by video conference and not in person.
- Disinfect regularly any commonly touched surfaces (10% bleach, 70% EtOH, commercial virucide). Take care never to mix cleaning products, which might produce hazardous fumes. SARS-CoV-2 can remain stable on surfaces for hours to days if not washed away or killed by disinfectant.



- Educate the workforce about SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19, and provide guidance on best practices for social distancing outside the workplace (e.g., procedures when getting gas/groceries, what has been observed in communities that reopen before proper procedures are in place to prevent viral spread, populations that are at higher risk of morbidity and mortality from COVID-19, etc.).

- If anyone returns to your workplace from out of state, or to a rural area of the state from an area with higher COVID-19 rates, a 14-day quarantine should be required prior to returning to work to ensure the individual is not a carrier.



- As building occupancy increases, emphasize face coverings and minimum 6-foot physical distancing when entering/exiting building, moving in hallways, and in common spaces (such as communal kitchens). Avoid using a bathroom if other stalls are occupied and wait in the hallway.

For more information visit [umaine.edu/coronavirus/umaine-science-and-medicine-updates](https://umaine.edu/coronavirus/umaine-science-and-medicine-updates)