

The CDC has issued guidance on the use of cloth face coverings with emphasis on use “in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies) **especially** in areas of significant community-based transmission.” (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>).

This and previously issued CDC and NYSDOH guidance emphasize the importance of social distancing by reducing or eliminating interactions with others, or ensuring at least 6-foot separation when interacting with others. These guidelines also emphasize proper hand washing and use of hand sanitizer, risk or hazard-based use of personal protective equipment, and disinfecting commonly used high-touch areas (e.g., computer keyboards, mouse, telephones, radios) especially if these surfaces are shared or touched by more than one person.

With the reduced staffing levels on campus, and work assignments that provide adequate social distancing, SUNY Poly is able to meet the recommendations of CDC and NYSDOH in most situations. However, certain essential job functions and activities may require employees to work in close quarters or within the recommended 6-foot separation on a regular or recurring basis.

SUNY Poly has a limited supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) appropriate for respiratory protection. This PPE is deployed to employees who have an inherent risk to exposure given their routine or special duties, such as direct patient care, or those with expected close contact with persons diagnosed with COVID-19 or those with symptoms. Given the limited supply of PPE currently around the globe, we must be responsible in the deployment of these items.

Therefore, in the spirit of the recent CDC recommendations, employees are encouraged to continue social distancing at all times on and off-campus, and to wear cloth face coverings in public settings. If they choose, employees may wear cloth face coverings on campus in those situations where PPE is not required. Use of these items would be at the discretion of the employee as a measure to protect others from asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic persons who may be in close contact.

Supervisors will be provided with cloth face coverings that can be distributed to employees who are working on campus and prefer to wear these items.

As with any hazards, it is always best practice to ELIMINATE the hazard, SUBSTITUTE or replace the hazard, ISOLATE the person from the hazard, CHANGE the way the person works, and lastly, PROTECT the person with PPE. The reduction in on-campus workforce, work from home policies, social distancing efforts, provision of PPE when appropriate, and encouraged use of face coverings in public or close contact settings are consistent with the CDC and NYSDOH recommendations to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

Utica Campus supervisors should contact Sean Clive, EHS Director (clives@sunypoly.edu) and Albany Site supervisors should contact Tom Diamond, VP of EHS (SUNYPolyEHS@sunypoly.edu) with requests for cloth face coverings and PPE for employees.

Supervisors should also indicate any situations where employees are unable to maintain social distancing measures. A review of the employee’s work activities may be necessary to determine appropriate PPE.

