“PHASE 5” COVID-19 Classroom Safety Guidance



# Purpose

To assist departments in resuming traditional in-person clases during the final “Phase 5” of Illinois’ “Restore Illinois” plan, the Environmental Health and Safety Office (EHSO) has updated the COVID-19 Classroom Safety Guidance. This guidance uses appropriate safety controls to decrease the small likelihood of COVID-19 transmission in classrooms now that the population in classrooms will be largely vaccinated. The controls include hand hygiene, enhanced cleaning, and signage.

# Scope

These guidelines apply to Classroom Service Spaces, East Campus General Use Classrooms, Large Classrooms (Lecture,) Medium Classroom (Seminar), and Small Classrooms (Discussion). After reviewing this document, if there are any questions or concerns, please direct your questions to the EHSO by emailing health-safety@uic.edu. Questions regarding departmental requirements should be directed to your department head.

# Definitions

**Classroom Service Spaces-** Includes projection rooms, telecommunications control booths, preparation rooms, coat rooms, closets, storage areas, etc., if they serve classrooms.

## East Campus General Use Classrooms- The classrooms on the east side which do not belong to a given unit or department.

**Highly Touched Surfaces-** Items that are touched frequently throughout the day. Some examples are door handles, tables, light switches, shared desks, smart boards, markers, staplers, remote controls, projectors, etc.

**Large Classroom – Lecture-** A classroom with a seating capacity over 60. A room generally used for scheduled instruction of large groups normally over 60 stations. These generally require 14 -26 net assignable square feet (NASF) of space per student station, including instructional space and circulation.

**Medium Classroom – Seminar-** A classroom with a seating capacity approximately of 21- 60 stations. These rooms generally require 18-28 net assignable square feet (NASF) of space per student station, including instructional space and circulation.

**Small Classroom – Discussion**- A classroom with a seating capacity of approximately of 1 - 20 stations. These rooms generally require 25-30 net assignable square feet (NASF) of space per student station, including instructional space and circulati

# Safety Requirements for Classrooms During the COVID-19 Pandemic

## Physical Distancing

**As the UIC student population will be required to be vaccinated against COVID-19, physical distancing in classrooms is no longer necessary. The only capacity limits in place in Phase 5 are capacity limits required by Fire Code. However, we must be poised to return to six foot spacing if the public health situation warrants a return to social distancing.**

## “Sit Here” Decals and COVID Occupancy Placards

## *East Campus General Use Classrooms*

VCAS will take responsibility for preparation of East Campus General Use Classrooms. VCAS will post the remaining COVID occupancy placards needed. The Fire Marshal will post the capacity limit placard required by Fire Code for classrooms with occupancies of over 50 people.

VCAS will leave decals that have already been installed on the seats denoting where students should sit in case Illinois needs to revert to Phase 4 of the “Restore Illinois” plan. In addition, new “sit here” decals will be installed at this time. in case a return to six foot spacing is needed in the future.

## *Procedure for All Other Classrooms*

Units should not remove the COVID occupancy placards. All classrooms must have COVID occupancy placards posted in case they become necessary at some point during the academic year. If you don’t have the COVID occupancy placards for classrooms you intend to use in fall of 2021, please email the UIC Fire Marshal at firemarshal@uic.edu.

The Fire Marshal will post the capacity limit placard required by Fire Code for classrooms with occupancies of over 50 people. By having both placards in place we can easily pivot between normal and six foot spacing. The Fire Marshal’s office will contact you if they need to gain access to your spaces. The Fire Marshal can be contacted via the email address firemarshal@uic.edu, should you have questions.

## Units should leave decals that have already been installed on the seats and floor denoting where students should sit in case Illinois needs to revert to Phase 4 of the “Restore Illinois” plan. If you have not yet installed “sit here” decals, you should install these decals at 6’ spacing using the layout that has been reviewed and approved by the UIC Fire Marshal.  Installation of the decals can either be done on your own, which would be the quickest, or units may submit a Service Request with Facilities Management. Units will be notified when decals can be removed.

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## Required “Hygiene sign – hand sanitizer” Signage for Classrooms With Normal Occupancies Greater than 50 People

For the East Campus General Use Classrooms, VCAS will post all signage still needed and supply hand sanitizer for those classrooms with a normal capacity above 50 students.

The Unit is responsible for obtaining and posting the following signage outside each classroom which is not an East Campus General Use Classroom which has a normal capacity above 50 students.

 “Hygiene sign – hand sanitizer”- The unit must print and post this sign.

## Hygienic Supplies and Cleaning Procedures

***East Campus General Use Classrooms***

* VCAS will provide a canister of wipes in all classrooms for use by faculty and students to wipe down the surface where they sit.
* Instructors must bring their own dry erase markers. Facilities Management (FM) will provide a box of wipes and spray bottle in rooms with markerboards and an eraser and chalk with chalkboards, which will be replaced and/or sanitized each day. Instructors should apply hand sanitizer before touching the spray bottle, eraser, or chalk.
* VCAS will disinfect frequently touched surfaces and conduct weekly disinfection in classrooms, utilizing an electrostatic cleaner that will disinfect and protect high-touch surfaces for the following day.

***Procedure for All Other Classrooms***

* Hand Sanitizer must be supplied by the Unit for all classrooms with a normal capacity above 50 persons. Hand sanitizer should be placed at the entrance to the classroom. Units will be responsible for placing hand sanitizer in their classrooms.
* It is suggested that instructors bring their own dry erase markers or chalk; though units may now provide these writing instruments for use by the group. Units must supply a means to erase markerboards or chalkboards.  Instructors should apply hand sanitizer before touching unit supplied markers, chalk, spray bottle or eraser.

## Optional “Instructor Safety Zone”

* Consider using tape to indicate a 8 to 10 foot deep safety zone for the instructor.

## Requirements for High Touch Surfaces

* Technolgy Solutions has confirmed that wipes provided in classrooms can be used on all surfaces. Other wipes, including those with bleach, should not be used on touch-screens.
* It is the responsibility of the unit to clean the audio-visual equipment in their classrooms on a daily basis, including microphone, lectern surface, computer keyboard, mouse, projector remote control, or other shared equipment for teaching use.
* FM will disinfect high touch surfaces in all classrooms on a daily basis, such as: door handles, light switches, and marker ledges. As stated above, FM will provide wipes in all east campus general use classrooms. It is the responsibility of the unit to supply disinfectant supplies in their classrooms for faculty and student to clean the surfaces where they sit.