

## Safety Information and Requirements for Graduate Students

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the College of Veterinary Medicine will be instituting a hybrid model of instruction for courses taught in academic year 2020-2021. This hybrid model of instruction will involve both in-person and virtual instruction.

As we prepare for these courses, we wanted to give you some more specific information about the COVID-19 protocols we have put in place to help keep you, faculty and staff from contracting or spreading infection with SARS-CoV-2 while you are in College facilities. These containment and mitigation protocols have been developed to be consistent with the recommendations of the CDC, Virginia Department of Health, the Virginia Tech Environmental Health and Safety, and the College's COVID-19 Task Force.

### Step 1: Online Training

Before you begin Fall semester, you will be required to complete the one-time online **COVID-19 Mitigation and Control Strategy Training Modules**. There are two of these for students:

- 1. VT Coronavirus Awareness Course:** This is a general COVID-19 training module required for all VT employees and students.  
<https://www.ehss.vt.edu/training/classes/COV/index.html>
- 2. For graduate students and DVM students in the Classes of 2024, 2023 and 2022:** Please complete the "CVM Non-Clinical Personnel ACT" Even though it doesn't indicate students, you are supposed to complete this one.  
[https://www.ehss.vt.edu/training/act\\_dept.php](https://www.ehss.vt.edu/training/act_dept.php)

**Note:** This training is required; you will not be permitted to enter the CVM without completing it.



**Do your online training**

### Step 2: Hokie Ready Screening App

Each day, you will be expected to access the "Hokie Ready" app and answer each question in the "Hokie Health" survey regarding travel, contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19, and symptoms consistent with COVID-19 infection in the last 24 hours.

After answering all of the questions on the app, you will either receive a green QRC in which case you may come into the CVM building, or a red QRC and you will be redirected to the triage nurse at Schiffert Health Center, who will provide you with further instructions (540-231-6444).

Only the Office of Emergency Management will have access to this information. Although you are not required to report a red QRC code, the reason for a red QRC code, or results of a COVID-19 test, you are encouraged to contact your instructors to notify them of an absence. We will work with students on an individual basis to address missed time, assignments, and how best to support you during isolation or quarantine.



**Have your say every day**

### **Step 3: Four key containment and mitigation practices in the learning environment**

There are 4 main containment and mitigation strategies that we expect you to practice while you are in within the College of Veterinary Medicine facilities. These strategies are important in that they not only help stop you from contracting SARS-CoV-2 infections, but also help stop you from spreading this infection to others.

#### **a) Face Coverings**

Wearing facemasks is one of the most effective ways to prevent transmission of SARS CoV-2. We require that you wear your mask **at all times while indoors**, except when you are eating or drinking. Before removing your mask for eating or drinking, make sure you can maintain a minimum of 6' distance from other people.

Remember when wearing your mask:



***“My mask protects you; Your mask protects me”***  
quote from University of Cambridge study

## a) Face Coverings cont.

Face coverings can be purchased or homemade. However, the minimal requirements are that they are 100% cotton, three-ply and washable. In addition, if you have medical documentation requiring alternate PPE such as KN95 masks, please contact your program coordinator.

Here are some tips adapted from the CDC on how to wear and care for your cloth masks:

### How to wear cloth face coverings?

Cloth face coverings should:

- Fit snugly, but comfortably against the side of the face
- Be secured with ties or ear loops
- Include multiple layers of fabric
- Allow for breathing without restriction
- Be able to be laundered without damage or change in shape

### How often should cloth face coverings be washed or otherwise cleaned?

- Cloth face coverings should be routinely washed depending on the frequency of use. We recommend that your cloth face coverings be washed daily.

### How should I store my cloth face covering?

- Masks should **not** be placed in pockets for later use.
- To store or transport, carefully fold the mask so that the contaminated outside is folded inward and against itself.
- Place in a clean or new paper bag and perform hand hygiene.

### How should I safely clean a cloth face covering?

- Machine washing or hand washing should suffice to properly wash a cloth face covering with regular laundry detergent, which should be done after each day of use.
- We recommend a hot water temperature for washing face coverings.

### How do I safely remove a used cloth face covering?

- When removing a cloth face covering, be careful not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth and perform hand hygiene immediately before and after removing.

#### DO wear a fabric mask safely.



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### Step 3: Four key containment and mitigation practices in the learning environment – cont.

#### b) Social Distancing

The practice of social distancing requires, when possible, that individuals observe at least 6 feet of distance between one another when engaged in university or work-related activities.

In many of the rooms in the College there will be floor markers to help you identify this distance and also signs outside the room that indicate the **maximum number** of people who can be in a room to maintain social distancing. Seating will be clearly marked in the classrooms. These maximum occupancy numbers should never be exceeded.

In situations where social distancing cannot be practiced, you will receive instruction from faculty or staff regarding the PPE that must be worn. Maximum room occupancies will still be observed during these times.



**Be smart and stay apart!**

#### c) Hand Washing

It is important to remember that you may be infected with SARS-CoV-2 and be unaware that you are potentially shedding the virus, which could lead to infection of others.

To reduce the risk of transmission, “*universal source control*” requires that you observe hand hygiene (WASH YOUR HANDS REGULARLY), practice respiratory hygiene (WEAR A MASK), and follow cough and sneeze etiquette (COUGH OR SNEEZE INTO YOUR ELBOW, BLOW YOUR NOSE INTO A TISSUE AND IMMEDIATELY DISPOSE OF THE TISSUE).



**Clean your hands all through the day**

### **Step 3: Four key containment and mitigation practices in the learning environment – cont.**

#### **d) Disinfection**

You will be expected to assist in the sanitation of your classroom and study spaces using appropriate disinfectants and protocols. This also necessitates individual responsibility and accountability for maintaining a clean work area. In each classroom, you will find disinfecting wipes or spray. Please clean your seating area upon arrival and again before departure to maximize protection for yourself and others.



**Spray away the virus**

### **Step 4: When you are not in the College**

We cannot mandate what individual students do while not at the College, however, we would strongly encourage you to continue to observe safe practices at all times. This will reduce your risk of becoming infected, as well as infecting others both outside and inside the College.

There are a number of good resources for identifying behaviors that may place you more at risk of contracting the SARS-CoV-2 and spreading this infection to others. We have included an example of one of these charts below. While the risk of some of these behaviors is relative to the location (prevalence) and situation (number of people involved and whether correct behaviors are being observed such as wearing masks and social distancing), we would strongly encourage you to keep your behaviors in the low to moderate categories.

### **Step 5: Finding more information**

If you need more specific information about this infection

- a. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>
- b. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/veterinarians.html>
- c. <https://www.virginia.gov/coronavirus/forwardvirginia/>
- d. <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/cloth-face-covers/>
- e. <https://intranet.vetmed.vt.edu/Covid19/Covid19Announcements>
- f. <http://coronavirus.dc.gov/>

**COVID-19**  
CORONAVIRUS DISEASE

**BE INFORMED:**

**Know Your Risk During COVID-19**

*On a scale of 1 to 10, how risky is...*

*Ranked by physicians from the TMA COVID-19 Task Force and the TMA Committee on Infectious Diseases*



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## A FINAL WORD

We recognize that many graduate students spend significant amounts of time in laboratories and other buildings with guidelines and procedures specific to their locations. The information provided here is specific for the main College of Veterinary Medicine building and Veterinary Teaching Hospital facilities. Continue to follow any building-specific and lab-specific COVID-19 protocols applicable for your location and working environment.

Please note that all operating procedures are subject to change dependent on Commonwealth, local health department, Blacksburg and Virginia Tech updates. We are making the best possible decisions with the most up-to-date information available. We appreciate your cooperation, understanding, and patience during this turbulent time.



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