



COVID-19

SUMMER 2021 GUIDE



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Message from the President

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff,

As you read this guide, I hope you will find the information provided useful and informative as we all work together to navigate through these challenging times. I encourage you to continue practicing appropriate safety and social distancing measures. Your efforts in keeping our college community safe speak to our unwavering commitment in providing a successful learning experience for our students, even during these most challenging circumstances. Together, I look forward to another safe and productive semester of learning.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Warren Nichols". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr. Warren Nichols
President



College of the Mainland

Summer 2021 Plan

College of the Mainland administration remains committed to providing a safe and successful learning experience for students as we return to normal operations. On June 1, all COM services and programs will return to campus under standard scheduling. This means offices will be open and employees will be working on campus. Classes will continue to be offered in whatever manner they were scheduled. Because summer hours may be different from Fall and Spring Terms, we encourage you to contact departments directly to confirm availability of services.

Consistent with guidance from CDC and orders from Governor Abbott, COM will continue to encourage safety, health, and hygiene measures. If the community sees an increase in local COVID-19 cases, or guidance changes, we could see adjustments to operations. The information presented here is true and accurate as of the date of dissemination.

Staying Healthy

Vaccination

Vaccination is a safe and effective way to help end the COVID-19 pandemic, to maintain your own health, and help protect those in the community who cannot be vaccinated. COM does not and cannot require vaccination for any student, employee, or visitor.

Masks

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has announced that there is no need for fully vaccinated individuals to wear masks. Governor Abbott has issued an executive order that prohibits COM from requiring masks of any individual. While masks are no longer required on COM campus, anyone who prefers to wear one may do so. Additionally, individuals who are not vaccinated are encouraged to wear a mask.

Distancing Encouraged

Classrooms will return to full capacity. When circumstances allow, distancing will provide additional protection from air and droplet borne disease transmission.

Wash Your Hands

Frequent handwashing will help to protect you from COVID-19 and many other illnesses. All employees and students are encouraged to wash their hands throughout the day. Proper handwashing technique includes the use of soap and rubbing for 20 seconds, covering all parts of hands and wrists. In addition to frequent handwashing, please use the hand sanitizer stations installed throughout campus.



Maintaining a Healthy Campus

Health Monitoring

Employees, students, and contractors coming to campus are encouraged to self-screen for symptoms related to COVID-19. Information is available at www.com.edu/selfscreen. We ask you to consider if you have symptoms related to COVID-19, a recent exposure to a person with COVID-19, or a positive COVID test. If any of these categories listed above apply to you, DO NOT come to campus. Contact your healthcare provider for medical guidance and notify your supervisor/instructor of the needed absence.



Scan the QR code to self screen.

Self-Reporting

Students, employees and COM contractors are asked to submit an [online self-report](#) and obtain additional guidance if you:

- Tested positive for COVID-19 with or without symptoms within the last 10 days
- Have symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19

- Had close contact (< 6' for 15+ minutes within a 24-hour period) with a known case of COVID-19 within the last 14 days.

Those who self-report will receive guidance regarding when they may return to campus. COM collaborates with the Galveston County Health District for case reporting, contact tracing, and notification of possible exposures.

Case Investigation and Notification

If an employee, student, or contractor has symptoms of/tests positive for/or has an exposure to COVID-19, the individual should complete a [self-report](#) as soon as possible. This triggers an investigation and allows us to quickly determine best practices to protect campus. This may include instructions to stay off campus and quarantine or isolate at home. In some instances, this may involve notification of others who have been in close contact with someone who is positive for COVID-19. Any person under investigation or who has completed a self-report and is awaiting response from COM should not be on campus until their investigation has concluded and they receive clear guidance.

If someone has been named as a possible exposure during an investigation, investigators will seek information to determine if there was close contact as defined by CDC. A person must meet all three criteria to be considered close contact:

- 15 minutes (cumulative)
- Within 6 feet proximity

- During a 24-hour span
- NOTE: Individuals who are fully vaccinated will not be asked to quarantine after close contact.

COM will consult and collaborate with the Galveston County Health District for official public health guidance, assistance, and referral on case investigations and notifications. Any unvaccinated individual identified as a close contact will be notified and advised of appropriate next steps.

Stay Home if Sick

If you are feeling sick in anyway, it is best to stay home and away from others. Contact your instructors or supervisors to address your absence. Please **do not** come on campus while ill.

Failure to Comply

You may be asked to leave campus if you are not complying with this guidance. Failure to comply is considered a discipline matter for employees or students.

Student Support and Services

Students with Disabilities and Requests for Accommodations

Students in need of services are encouraged to notify (and request services from) the Counselor for Students with Disabilities regarding any assistance or special accommodations they may need. Refer to the Guidelines for Documentation (PDF) for more information on registering for Services for Students with Disabilities. For more info, please contact hbankston@com.edu or 409-933-8520.

Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds and COVID-19 Financial Aid Support

The federal government has provided colleges and universities with emergency grant funding to assist with student financial needs related to COVID-19. See COM's COVID Financial Assistance page <http://www.com.edu/coronavirus/covid-aid> for more details. Students must meet all eligibility requirements for federal financial aid and are eligible to apply each semester while funds are available. Summer 2021 applications will be available shortly.

Employee Considerations

Reasonable Accommodations and Other Modifications Due to COVID-19

Employees who need to request reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) may do so by contacting Human Resources. Employees wanting non-ADA modifications to their job, workspace, schedule, or duties are encouraged to discuss options with their supervisor.

Vacation, Sick and Personal Business Leave

Employees are encouraged to use their leave. All accrued vacation leave over 240 hours shall be forfeited if not used by the end of the fiscal year. We encourage employees to use excess hours before they expire and to use their leave to best maintain their wellness.

Employee Travel

Restrictions on employee travel have been lifted. Please use standard travel approval processes.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

EAP is a voluntary, work-based service that offers free and confidential assessments, short-term counseling, referrals, and follow-up services to employees who have personal and/or work-related problems. The EAP is available to address a broad body of issues affecting mental and emotional well-being, such as alcohol and other substance abuse, stress, grief, family problems and psychological disorders. To learn more, visit UTEAP at www.uth.edu/uteap.

Supervisor Considerations

Requests for Workspace Modifications

At this time, no workplace modifications are required. Those that are in place may be maintained if desired. If you require Facilities Services assistance to rearrange furniture, remove barriers, or implement additional precautions, please communicate this through your supervisor to make those requests. Please note that some requests may not be implemented.

Cleaning

Please reinforce to all employees that they play a critical role in cleaning and disinfecting workspaces and common areas. Every classroom and work area should have hand sanitizer, surface disinfectant, and paper towels or wipes. If your work group needs additional resources, please contact Facilities Services.

Workforce Scheduling and Job Modifications

Effective June 1, all employees are expected to return to campus for operations. Employees wishing to exercise the compressed summer schedule from June 7 to August 14 should work with their supervisors to ensure mutual understanding and departmental coverage. Telework arrangements are addressed in policy DJ(LOCAL): Assignment, Work Load, and Schedules. Contact Human Resources if you need additional guidance on these matters.

Reinforce “Stay Home if Sick”

Supervisors serve a critical role in ensuring a healthy workplace. Please encourage employees to stay home if sick or to go home if symptoms emerge while on campus.

If an Employee Gets Sick/Tests Positive/Has an Exposure

Please ask the employee to complete a self-report as soon as possible. This triggers the investigation from HR and allows us to quickly determine best practices to protect campus. This may include instructions to quarantine or isolate at home and the notification of those who have been in close contact with someone who is positive for COVID-19.

Facilities Services

Cleaning Protocols

COM Facilities Management has worked with our custodial contractor and custodial staff to establish cleaning protocols consistent with CDC guidelines. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting of campus surfaces continues. Employees should participate in the cleaning and disinfecting of the shared areas they use, work or teach in. Facilities services will provide surface disinfectant and wipes or paper towels for use in classrooms and shared spaces. Please continue to spray and wipe surfaces, equipment, and workspaces between users.

Water Fountains

The newly installed water fountains that allow containers to be filled will remain open. Other water fountains will be temporarily out of service. All employees and students are encouraged to bring their own container

for water rather than drinking directly from fountains.

Vending Machines

Vending machines in several buildings will be open. Please use hand sanitizer located near machine.

Events and Facilities

COM facilities may be rented and reserved by internal and external groups.

Workspace Modifications

The College has installed clear barriers in several areas to maintain physical separation between employees and those they serve. Please communicate through your supervisor if you would like modifications removed or implemented.