

2021

COVID-19 campus update, August 6, 2021

Eastern Michigan University

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COVID-19 vaccine requirement for on-campus housing residents; Vaccine incentive program – August 6, 2021

Friday, August 6, 2021

The following excerpt from President Smith's Aug. 6, 2021 message to campus pertains to the University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

To the Eastern Michigan University community,

As we are all well aware after many months of working through the COVID-19 pandemic, conditions continue to change. As these conditions change, we must adapt to evolving guidance from healthcare authorities. We appreciate the ongoing resilience of the members of our community as we adjust based on the most current conditions.

The CDC and the Washtenaw County Health Department (WCHD) have updated their guidance for Washtenaw County in light of increased community spread of COVID-19. The County has now moved into the “substantial” level of COVID-19 transmission and, following CDC guidance, now recommends the wearing of face masks for everyone in indoor public spaces.

Due to this change in transmission levels in the County and the updated CDC/WCHD guidance, effective Monday, August 9, 2021, all members of the campus community (including all students, employees, and visitors) must wear a face mask while indoors, regardless of vaccination status, except in the following circumstances where indoor masking is not required:

- You are an instructor teaching in a classroom, you are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, and you have verified your vaccination status with the University [here](#). Instructors teaching without a face mask should maintain six-foot physical distance if not behind plexiglass, and may remain unmasked during the class period only.
- You have a disability-based University accommodation regarding wearing a face mask (employees requesting an accommodation should contact hr_benefits@emich.edu and students requesting an accommodation should contact EMU_DeanOfStudents@emich.edu).
- You are alone in a private office, living space, or private motor vehicle with the door closed, or in another similarly isolated space.
- You are actively eating, drinking, or swimming.
- You are undergoing a physical exam of your mouth, nose, or throat by a medical professional.

- You are attending an event that has been approved for a special exemption. Requests to consider exemptions for events must be submitted to the Office of Conference & Event Services (CES) at book_emu@emich.edu.

Face masks are not required outdoors regardless of vaccination status.

Individual University employees and offices cannot waive the University's indoor face mask requirement -- including the mandate that face masks be worn by all students in classrooms -- without the approval of the President's Office. When necessary, instructors should reference and follow the [University's Guide to Classroom Management](#) in the event an individual in the classroom refuses to comply with the University's face mask policy. It is considered disruptive classroom behavior to refuse to comply as directed.

We hope that this indoor face mask mandate is temporary. The best way to return to a sense of normalcy is for people to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. You may learn about opportunities for vaccination and the vaccine's safety [here](#). We strongly urge all members of the EMU community who qualify to get vaccinated, as it is one of the safest and most effective ways to minimize the spread and seriousness of COVID-19.

We understand that the University has issued many policies in recent weeks and this series of communications may create confusion. Unfortunately, the guidance from health professionals is rapidly changing as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve. The University -- and all of us as individuals -- must be prepared to change as conditions change.

We will publish a comprehensive summary of all current policies in place two weeks before the start of the fall semester. In the meantime, you may review safety policies [here](#).

Please continue to closely monitor your email for further updates in the days and weeks ahead.