

2022

COVID-19 Campus Update, March 24, 2022

Eastern Michigan University

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To the Eastern Michigan University community,

As I shared earlier this week, our community is now experiencing significant improvements in key COVID-19 data:

- COVID-19 case counts are down dramatically [statewide](#), in our [County](#), and on [our campus](#).
- COVID-19 testing continues to be free and accessible at the campus [testing center](#), and testing [positivity rates](#) are among the lowest since we opened the center in fall 2020.
- The EMU community has an [extremely high vaccination rate](#): Over 90% of EMU employees and an overwhelming majority of EMU students with an in-person component have been vaccinated against COVID-19.

Importantly, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has classified Washtenaw County as having a [“low” risk of transmission](#) of COVID-19, the State of Michigan has determined that we are in a post-surge [“recovery phase”](#), and the [Washtenaw County Health Department \(WCHD\)](#) advises that there is “no longer broad recommendation to wear face masks in indoor public locations.”

Throughout the pandemic, we have developed and modified our EMU Safe policies based on [data and guidance](#).

After consulting with the [EMU Safe Steering Committee](#), we are therefore ready to take the next steps to align our [EMU Safe Policies](#) with these data and recommendations from government health agencies.

New face mask policy

Beginning Monday, March 28, face masks will no longer be required in many indoor public spaces on campus. We remain mindful, however, of providing safe spaces for faculty, staff, students, and community members in all situations. In this regard, masks will continue to be required in spaces that likely involve individuals gathering for an extended period of time in a relatively confined area:

- Face masks will continue to be required in classrooms, labs, and other instructional spaces while class/lab is in session. Instructors who are vaccinated and have [reported their vaccination status](#) to the University may be maskless while teaching.
- Face masks will be required in larger events, including the April [Commencement](#) ceremonies and tomorrow's [Undergraduate Symposium](#).
- Face masks will continue to be required in the COVID-19 [Testing Center](#), located in the Student Center.

- Face masks must be worn in University vehicles or other shared transportation (cars, vans, buses, trains, air).
- Face masks may also be required in private individual offices at the office occupant's discretion because these spaces are typically smaller and used for longer interactions. However, there will be no requirement for masking in shared reception or student or employee service areas. By way of example, in an office such as the [University Advising and Career Development Center \(UACDC\)](#), the reception areas will have no masking requirement, while an individual advisor or career coach may require face masks in their private individual office.

These spaces will be clearly identified with the University's [new "mask required" signage](#). It is important to respect these signs when entering these areas.

As a reminder there may be continued masking and or other requirements for individuals who are verified by [University Telehealth](#) as close contacts or diagnosed with COVID-19, and individuals must still [report to the University](#) if they are a close contact or test positive for COVID-19.

Finally, it is important to remember that wearing a face mask is a personal choice. As a community of diversity, inclusion, and mutual respect, individuals who opt to wear masks in situations that go beyond our requirements must be fully respected and supported in their choice. The University will continue to make face masks available for free at the Student Center Information Desk, DPS Headquarters (1200 Oakwood), and other locations around campus. Please review the University's updated face mask policies for [employees](#) and [students](#) for tips about the most effective ways to wear a face mask.

Daily Health Screenings

Additionally, we will stop enforcing the [daily health screening](#) on Monday, March 28, but the campus community is encouraged to voluntarily continue using the tool as a helpful resource.

Individuals who are sick should not come to work, class, or other activities. We will soon launch a new online tool to provide helpful tips to promote this important goal.

Other EMU Safe policies remain in place

Employees and students must continue to complete a [COVID Report Form](#) if they test positive for COVID-19, experience symptoms of COVID-19, have a close contact with someone with COVID-19, or [meet other conditions](#).

Mandatory COVID-19 testing will continue for [unvaccinated employees](#) and unvaccinated students who are subject to a [vaccine mandate](#) or the [Students Stay Safe](#) program.

COVID-19 testing continues to be available for free to all members of the campus community at the campus Testing Center at the Student Center. [Appointments are required.](#)

Employees and students are encouraged to use the University's [Telehealth Clinic](#) with questions about these policies or if they experience COVID-19 symptoms.

Please visit the [EMU Safe website](#) to review other important materials and for regular updates.

James Smith, Ph.D.