

Return to Campus Guideline

Occupational Health and Safety

Version 3: NOVEMBER 2021

Approved by Executive Committee: October 27, 2021



MEDICINE HAT
COLLEGE

Purpose of the Plan

Medicine Hat College is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment. The return to campus guideline is applicable to all employees, students, contractors and visitors accessing the college in Medicine Hat and Brooks. It has been developed to:

- ✓ Communicate the risk reduction measures that have been implemented to minimize exposure and transmission of COVID-19 and any other virus on campus.
- ✓ Communicate public health expectations for all persons accessing the campus.
- ✓ Transition from pandemic response to regular operations, living with the COVID-19 virus.
- ✓ Reduce stress and anxiety for those returning to work or learn on campus

Priorities

- ✓ Health, safety and well-being of students and employees
- ✓ Students achieving learning objectives
- ✓ Service to current and future students
- ✓ Maintain and support community partnerships

Living with COVID-19

Protecting the health and well-being of students, employees and campus visitors remains our top priority, while being mindful of the importance of adaptability as conditions change.

While elimination of the COVID-19 virus will not occur in the near future we can certainly adapt to living with COVID-19 as we do with other manageable seasonal ailments such as influenza. Vaccination, infection prevention and exposure control measures are the tools we have to make everyone less vulnerable to acquiring the COVID-19 virus and experiencing serious outcomes.

Preventing the spread of COVID-19 relies on everyone doing their part, including:

- daily self-monitoring for symptoms
- staying home when sick, even with mild symptoms
- practicing good personal hygiene practices – frequent hand washing, covering coughs/sneezes
- considering vaccination

Strong public health management of cases, clusters and outbreaks will also have an important role to play. Authorized vaccines have proven to be highly effective at reducing serious outcomes from the COVID-19 virus. See resources below:

[Government of Canada COVID-19 Effectiveness and benefits of vaccination](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Vaccine Effectiveness.](#)

[My Health Alberta Immunization COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

As vaccination programs continue across Alberta, their positive effects are evident in reducing virus transmission in communities, reducing hospitalizations and ICU admissions and decreasing serious outcomes. [Alberta Health Service COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions.](#)

While no single layer of protection against COVID-19 is perfect, when multiple layers of protection are combined, the risk of transmission is significantly reduced.

Working with local Public Health

Medicine Hat College continues to liaise with the local public health office for COVID-19 prevention, response and case management.

Safety is Everyone's Responsibility

We can all contribute personally and professionally by following public health guidance both on and off campus.

It is up to each one of us to do our part, but it is our collective efforts that will make the difference. This is the time to be kind, to be calm, and to be safe.

Personal Measures to Prevent the Spread

- Review the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) before arriving on campus to self-monitor for symptoms or exposures to someone who has COVID-19. Individuals experiencing symptoms should stay home, consult the [AHS Online COVID Self-Assessment Tool](#) to determine if COVID-19 testing is needed, and contact 811 or their healthcare provider for medical advice as necessary.
- [Vaccines](#) are recognized by AHS as a critical way to limit the spread of COVID-19. MHC encourages people to educate themselves to make informed decisions that protect their families and communities. [Vaccine myths and facts | Alberta.ca](#)
- Continue to follow health guidelines for personal hygiene, such as washing your hands frequently, coughing or sneezing into your bent elbow, and avoiding touching your face or rubbing your eyes. These measures are especially important before and after coming into contact with high-touchpoint surfaces like door handles, bannisters, elevator buttons, kitchens and equipment.
- As per provincial guidelines physical distancing is required in all common spaces. It is not required in the learning environment (classrooms/labs/lecture theatres) or in the cafeteria.
- As per provincial guidelines, non-medical masks must be worn in all public indoor areas on campus in Medicine Hat and Brooks, this includes classrooms, hallways and common spaces. Masks do not have to be worn when individuals are working outdoors AND there is a minimum of 2 metres between people.
 - If you do not have a mask, they are located at the main entrances of both campuses. At the Medicine Hat Campus they are also available at the security office and at the front desk at the Brooks Campus.
 - If you encounter a person who chooses not to comply, we ask that you do your part and sustain 2 metres of distance.
 - If you can not wear a mask and require accommodation, connect with your dean or supervisor to discuss possible accommodations

Compliance with MHC COVID-19 Policy

- As per the MHC COVID-19 policy all persons (ages 12+) accessing MHC facilities must be able to provide one of the following:
 - proof of full vaccination with a COVID-19 vaccine approved by Health Canada and/or WHO;
 - proof of a negative privately paid COVID -19 rapid test, taken within 72 hours of presenting or
 - proof of an approved medical exemption.
- Employees and students who choose to rapid test and acquire COVID-19, upon recovery may continue to test positive for the COVID-19 virus. In this situation, an accommodation (exemption from rapid testing) will be required. Students will be required to connect with the Registrar and employees with HR for accommodation. The accommodation certificate will provide proof of compliance with the COVID-19 policy.

General Campus Planning

MHC remains committed to providing a healthy working and learning environment and appreciates your support as we navigate through the fall semester. We ask that you continue to respect the health needs and choices of others within our college community.

Campus Logistics

- Restricted access has been removed and general access is provided during regular operational hours.
- 24 hour access is not available at this time and will be reassessed mid-December.
- As per the MHC COVID-19 policy, all persons (ages 12+) accessing MHC facilities must be able to present one of the following:
 - Proof of full vaccination with a COVID-19 vaccine approved by Health Canada and/or WHO;
 - proof of a negative privately paid COVID-19 rapid test, taken within 72 hours of presenting or
 - proof of an approved medical exemption.
- Students and employees are required to submit proof to the [COVID-19 Policy Verification System](#)

- Invited guests and visitors are required to access the campuses through the main entrance and show proof to security on arrival at the Medicine Hat campus or the front desk at the Brooks campus. Random spots checks will be completed on a daily basis by security at the Medicine Hat campus and by the Brooks Campus Administrator or designate at the Brooks campus.
- Preventative maintenance has occurred on the building ventilation systems ensuring it is adequate and functioning as designed.
- Signage remains in place to encourage physical distancing, it is recommended to walk on the right side of hallways and stairwells and allow as much space as possible between yourself and other people.
- Face masks are mandatory in all public spaces and workplaces as per provincial guidelines. If you encounter a person who is choosing to not comply, do your part and sustain 2-meter distancing. Signage is in place at entrance points and throughout campus.
- Educational and public spaces are cleaned every evening. Increased cleaning protocols are in place during the day in public areas for high frequency touch surfaces such as door handles, handrails, elevator buttons, etc. In multi-use rooms such as theatres, classrooms, meeting rooms etc. cleaning is not completed in between bookings. It is important to note that Alberta Health has advised that evidence has shown that surface transmission of COVID-19 is not a significant risk.
- Sanitizing kits are placed in multiuse classrooms and meeting spaces. Connect with facility operations if supplies require replenishing.
- Hand sanitization stations are placed at regular intervals throughout common spaces and at the entrances/exits to the building.
- External bookings will not be accepted on campus for Fall 2021. College-related events will be permitted, but MHC facilities will be unavailable for community use.

Campus Services

- Common Ground Coffee Shop and cafeteria are open. Crave Pub remains closed at this time.
- The Medical Office – will continue to operate by appointment only – additional protocols may apply.

Student Residence

- Student residences at both campuses will be close-to-full occupancy for the fall. Units will be reserved for the isolation or quarantine of students in the event of infection.
- Students in residence must follow the protocols established for living in residence that were provided in the move-in package. Questions regarding these protocols can be directed to the student residence office.

Events/Activities

- Non-educational activities should be planned with preventative health measures in mind. Strategies may include:
 - Availability of hand sanitizer or hand washing facilities
 - Ability for attendees to maintain physical distancing
 - Reduce transmission points by eliminating shared items
 - If serving food or beverages, consider single serve items.
 - Consideration must be given to ensure attendees are in compliance with the MHC COVID-19 policy and may include physical presence of persons checking personal identification and vaccine or rapid testing documentation.
 - MHC organized activities occurring offsite, must adhere to the venue as well as MHC protocols. The most stringent will take precedence.

Academic Logistics

- In-person classes are scheduled without physical distancing requirements. Face masks are required regardless of whether physical distancing of 2m is possible, this includes classrooms, meeting rooms, and common areas.
- Programs are encouraged to provide flexibility to students or staff who may be experiencing symptoms and not able to attend campus.
- Faculty planning educational activities should consider the preventative health strategies outlined in the events/activities section.
- Depending on the learning environment, additional protocols may be required to reduce the risk of transmission. Faculty and academic staff should connect with their dean to discuss the health and safety concern and work to find a reasonable solution. If necessary, the dean and OHS manager will collaborate to revise or develop a department specific hazard assessment.
- Students and instructors are expected to follow guidelines for specific settings where work integrated learning placements occur, including clinical, teaching, internships, co-op placements, and other community engaged work placements. The specific School

should be knowledgeable of program-specific COVID-19 guidance and ensure that student and instructor risk is minimized in these placements.

Department Logistics

At MHC, everyone has a direct responsibility for health and safety as an essential part of their job and so must work collaboratively to control hazards. Each person takes initiative on health and safety issues, works to solve problems, and makes improvements on an on-going basis. If you have questions regarding returning to work on campus discuss with your supervisor. The OHS office is available to assist as needed.

- Employees returning to campus should review the current [Site Hazard Assessments](#) and the [Job Hazard Assessment](#) (JHA) pertinent to their role. If additional measures are required to provide a health and safe working environment, they should be discussed with their supervisor. If there is not a JHA for the specific role, the [General Job Hazard Assessment](#) applies. Connect with your supervisor if you have any questions or if updates are required.
- Non-medical masks must be worn in all indoor workplaces unless:
 - the employee is alone in an office or workstation and is separated by at least 2 metres from all other persons or is separated by a physical barrier that prevents droplet transmission;
 - Employees unable to wear a face mask should discuss with their supervisor to discuss possible accommodations.
- Protocols have been developed for department work area sanitizing: [Guidelines for cleaning work areas](#). Sanitizing kits have been provided to departments, supplies can be replenished by visiting the Facility Operations office. Additional sanitizing kits can be requested by emailing campussafety@mhc.ab.ca
- Physical barriers have been placed at customer service points as identified in the hazard assessment and in various office spaces based on required work tasks and level of risk.
- Supervisors may need to provide flexibility to accommodate employees who may be experiencing symptoms or have been notified they are a close contact of a positive case and are not able to attend campus.
- Employee Remote Work options may be available for certain roles – discuss with your supervisor if applicable.

Travel – Domestic & International

- Follow provincial public health recommendations for domestic travel (personal or business), including the destination province. Reference [MHC Policy #FN-01 Travel and Expenses](#) prior to planning and arranging travel to conduct authorized college business.
- Students and employees should consult the federal government's [Travel Advice and Advisories - Travel.gc.ca](#) and the [MHC International Travel Policy](#) when considering studying or working outside of Canada.

Mental Health Supports

Students and employees may be anxious or experiencing increased stress about returning to campus. Mental health supports are critical for everyone's health and well-being as part of the return to in-person activities on campus.

Employee Resources:

- Employees with benefits can access counselling and wellness services through the employee and family assistance programs.
- Free virtual mental health 1 hour workshops are offered through the Province to support mental health and wellness via [AHS Wellness Exchange](#)
- Monthly Wellness Together Newsletter and [Wellness SharePoint Site](#) – communicating MHC & Community wellness activities and resources.

Students Resources:

- Mental Health and Counselling Office <https://www.mhc.ab.ca/Services/CounsellingAndCare/StudentCounselling>
- Students' Association - <http://www.samhc.ca/>
- Indigenous Support Office - <https://www.mhc.ab.ca/Services/IndigenousSupport>
- International Student Support: <https://www.mhc.ab.ca/InternationalStudents/ISS>

MHC Community Resources:

- Interfaith Centre – the chaplain provides non-denominational spiritual counselling and support health and well-being of the college community. <https://www.mhc.ab.ca/Services/CounsellingAndCare/InterfaithCentre/Chaplaincy>

Rapid Response to a reported case of COVID-19

Decision trees are available to students, employees, instructors and supervisors at www.mhc.ab.ca/covid-19 to guide and support.

<p>Staff member/Student has symptoms – calls in sick. <i>Order 05-2020 legally obligates individuals who have a cough, fever, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell, runny nose, or sore throat (that is not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition) to be in isolation for 10 days from the start of symptoms, or until symptoms resolve, whichever takes longer. These requirements must be followed regardless of whether or not the individual has been tested for COVID-19.</i></p>	<p>Student illness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Upon notification that a student has symptoms the instructor shall advise the student to stay home and minimize contact with others. ➤ Recommend they complete the AHS online self-assessment for consideration of a COVID-19 test. Refer them to the student decision tree. ➤ Provide direction for academic success while recovering from illness. ➤ The student is not obligated to disclose a positive test result to the instructor, however it is appreciated as it enables MHC to determine if any close contact notification or additional preventative measures are required. ➤ The instructor shall immediately report notification of a positive test to the Dean for their program for case management and Support. ➤ If a student does not disclose symptoms, test results or is not tested. They should remain off campus for 10 days or until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer. <p>Employee illness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Upon notification that a staff member has symptoms the supervisor shall recommend to complete the AHS online self-assessment for consideration of COVID-19 test. ➤ The supervisor shall discuss options with the staff member to either to work remotely (if possible) or take sick time (if available) ➤ The employee is not obligated to disclose a positive test result, however it is appreciated as it enables MHC to determine in any close contact notification or additional preventative measures are required. The supervisor shall immediately report notification of a positive test to the OHS manager and support case management and follow-up. ➤ If an employee does not disclose symptoms, test results or is not tested. They should remain off campus for 10 days or until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer.
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Communication Plan

Medicine Hat College is committed to sharing information that supports the health and safety of our college communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Institutional Updates & Resources

As the pandemic situation continues to evolve, MHC will communicate updates regarding operational changes, health and safety measures, and related information through the following channels:

- **Websites**
 - www.mhc.ab.ca/covid-19 Publicly accessible page includes general information, updates to current situation, and links to college, public health and government resources
 - <https://source.mhc.ab.ca/sites/COVID19/> Internal site with information and resources for faculty and staff

- **Social media**
 - Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MHCollege>
 - Twitter: <https://twitter.com/mhcollege>
 - Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/mhcollege/>

- **Campus-wide announcements**
 - Emails are delivered directly to employees and students

Case Notification

Notification of positive cases of COVID-19 that were on campus during the infectious period will be shared at www.mhc.ab.ca/covid-19. Information may also be communicated via other channels.