

## Social Distancing at Work

While Algonquin College has taken a number of interim measures to limit the population on its campuses at this time, it is important to identify safety precautions for any employees who do need to be on campuses. A range of measures to support flexibility for employees have been introduced and are being accommodated through the interim [Human Resources policies](#).

The broader community efforts are currently focused on mitigating the spread of COVID-19 through social distancing strategies and we need to respect these guidelines to contribute to the effort to slow the spread of illness. We can effectively practice these measures during our normal work practices in a variety of ways.

Social distancing is a strategy that involves the practical minimizing of circumstances that tend to encourage the transmission of an infectious disease rather than deter it. Epidemiological studies have shown that social distancing measures can contribute significantly to slowing the rate of spread. When combined with other workplace measures such as staying home if sick, frequent hand-washing and cough etiquette, social distancing measures can be effective in the workplace, as well.

The following recommendations are intended for practical application as we continue to work through the coming weeks.

- Taking advantage of opportunities to allow employees to work from home, or working flexible hours to avoid unnecessary crowding. These arrangements need to be made with your supervisor, in accordance with the interim [Human Resources policies](#).
- Exercising caution with person-to-person engagements by keeping your distance (1 – 2 meters)
- No hand shaking or physical personal contact that is not necessary
- Avoiding large gatherings where possible; where distance cannot be maintained
- Avoiding unnecessary and non-essential in-person meetings

- Preferably, conducting meetings that are necessary by using email, teleconferencing and platforms such as Zoom, Webex, Skype etc. to promote social distancing if that is not possible, conducting necessary meetings in over-sized spaces to avoid crowding
- Avoiding long durations for necessary physical interactions
- Considering ways to get to work that avoid crowded public transit periods. Perhaps flexible hours can be adopted if public transit peak periods can be avoided.
- Promoting eating lunch in personal workspaces rather than attending the cafeteria for breaks and meals.
- Reducing natural social time in shared office spaces such as lounges, lunch rooms, kitchens, watercoolers and photocopy rooms
- Adhering to public health hygiene recommendations by washing your hands after touching commonly used items or coming into contact with someone who is sick.
  - Proper hand washing involves thoroughly scrubbing hands with soap and water
  - Use hand-sanitizers when washing your hands is not available as a first choice
  - Avoid touching your face, nose, mouth, and eyes
  - Practice proper coughing or sneezing etiquette
  - Properly dispose of anything that comes in contact with your mouth such as tissues or plastic eating utensils

Please visit the dedicated [Ottawa Public Health website](#) for stopping the spread of germs.

Please refer to the College [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) website](#) for further information and to pose questions related to our effort to contribute to controlling the spread of COVID-19.

Also, please speak to your supervisor if you have any questions about how this guidance affects you in your job.