COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures

Northeast has developed a business continuity plan that consists of three phases to bring students and employees back to campuses across the 20-county service area. This strategic operations plan is a living document that is designed to provide guidance to the college community. The three phases of this plan include:

Phase I: Prepare the college facilities, procedures and practices prior to employees and students returning to campus.

Phase II: Establish operations protocols with employees and a limited number of students on campus.

Phase III: Establish operations protocols with employees, students and the public on campus.

This Standards of Operations Procedure (SOP) is designed to provide students, faculty, supervisors and staff the directions needed to operate the College during phases II and III of the business continuity plans. Items outlined in this set of procedures are subject to change based on updated recommendations or guidelines from the CDC and local health department.
Resources


General Procedures: This set of procedures is designed to address issues and concerns specifically around the COVID-19 pandemic situation with all other existing emergency preparedness measures for events like weather and other natural disasters continuing and taking precedence as warranted. As a part of this set of procedures, the following are overarching general procedures to follow related to the pandemic:

1) Facemasks or Face Shields
   a. Facemasks or shields are required to be worn by faculty, staff, students, and visitors in all college buildings at all locations. However, face coverings will not be required when someone is working in an enclosed or private office or when outdoors working or moving between buildings unless social distancing of at least six feet cannot be maintained. Employees or students that are not able to wear a face mask are asked to provide an exemption note from a medical health provider. Employees will file the note with the Northeast Human Resources Office. Students will file the note with Vice President of Student Services.

   Employees failure to comply
   b. Employees are asked to hold each other accountable to help prevent the spread of the virus. Please remind employees to wear a face mask.
   c. Disciplinary action may be taken by an employee’s supervisor if this requirement is not followed.

   Students failure to comply
   a. Faculty and staff that observe a student inside a building not wearing a face mask are asked to remind the student to wear one. If the student does not have their own face mask, the employee should escort the student to a location where a disposable face mask can be provided.
   b. After being asked to wear a face mask and a student refuses to wear a face mask in a Northeast building or class, that student will be asked to leave campus and will be counted absent for all classes missed due to not wearing a face mask.
   c. Students that repeatedly fail to comply are to be reported to the student conduct office.

2) Social distancing:
   a. Six feet of distance between individuals will always be practiced. If there is a need to work within less than six feet of another person, face masks or shields are required for the participants.
   b. Hallways that do not allow significant width to allow social distances for passing going both ways are to be marked as single way to manage traffic flow.
   c. Gathering spaces such as large labs, classrooms, conference areas and meeting rooms will be limited to 50% of the normal occupancy of the space, while maintaining social distancing.
d. To determine the number of occupants in a space, use 36 square feet per person and the square footage of the room minus square footage for furniture and equipment in the space.

3) Strategies to ensure physical distancing. Examples Include:
   a. Staggered break times between classes to avoid large groups of students, faculty and staff meeting in hallways
   b. Classroom and conference/meeting room seating is reset to promote physical distancing
   c. Limit chairs per table for dining, desk and/or conference area
   d. Use tape on floors, if necessary, to designate locations that are six feet apart in high traffic areas
   e. Staff and student lounges will be closed

4) Spaces that may become contaminated with the virus will be closed and a thorough sanitization of that space will be performed.

5) Visitors, students, faculty and staff who do not comply with the implemented guidelines will be advised to refrain from all presence on campus. If they choose to violate College procedures, they will be referred to the College security or local law enforcement if they become disruptive.

6) All students, faculty and staff “Code of Conduct” policies and procedures as well as community/state level requirements will apply and should provide guidance in event of intentional noncompliance.

**Training:** Employees will be required to participate in a virtual training session that introduces the various campus operations in relation to how Northeast will operate in phases II and III of our recovery plans. Training will include information on the decision-making process, workplace expectations including recognizing signs and symptoms of COVID-19, virus transmission, location of resources, hand hygiene, physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting, conducting meetings, instruction methods, residence life, food service and general directions to achieve the goal of continuing to minimize the risk of exposure to the coronavirus and begin to open our facilities to the public for conducting business. Current resources will be available on the COVID-19 web page and an FAQ section will be maintained.

**Sanitization:** Custodial services will implement recommendations from the CDC and the local health departments as guidance for expanded cleaning and disinfecting. This guidance will be used in our daily operations, limiting the risks COVID-19. Areas on campuses that are temporarily unoccupied will have cleaning deferred or reduced in scope will have limited cleaning protocols. The custodial supervisor may re-assign staff to better perform expanded cleaning and disinfecting where necessary. Continual development and modifications to the plan will occur to evaluate and determine best practices to be cleaned and disinfected based on the frequency of occupancy. Priority will be given in cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces in general public areas as staff is available to complete the work. Classrooms, labs and departmental equipment will be cleaned and disinfected by the occupants utilizing the spaces. Frequency of disinfection will be based on frequency of occupancy. It would be recommended that high touch surfaces in these areas that are used by more than one set of students throughout the day shall be disinfected between classes by the occupants.
Disinfecting products will be provided by Custodial Services as resources are available. Custodial Services will utilize EPA-Approved disinfectants against COVID-19. Hand sanitizer locations will be located on campus based on frequency of occupancy and traffic flow. It is the desire to have hand sanitizer readily available, but the distribution of hand sanitizer and locations will be based on dispenser availability and product available. Primary locations will be maintained by Custodial services. Employees shall be able to re-fill individual locations at the primary locations or at the Physical Plant. All cleaning and disinfecting protocol questions and concerns shall be brought to the attention of the Custodial Supervisor – Loretta Brabec or Asst. Custodial Supervisor Wendell Rohde.

**Instruction and Learning Environments:** Northeast will continue to meet our mission by delivering career and technical education, academic transfer education, continuing and business education and applied research instruction during phase II. Classes will consist of on-campus classes that are essential to academic excellence in an on-campus classroom or lab setting. Those classes that can be moved to either synchronous or asynchronous distance learning will be scheduled in the appropriate format so students understand the type of delivery each class will have as part of the registration process. Educational Services will develop an attendance and excuse practice that acknowledges and supports students who become ill without creating barriers and without requiring unnecessary visits to health facilities for documentation.

a. **On-Campus Classes:**

   Gathering spaces such as large labs, classrooms, conference areas and meeting rooms will be limited to 50% of the normal occupancy of the space. To determine the number of occupants in a space, calculate the room square footage minus square footage used by furniture and equipment, and divide the remainder by 36 square feet per person. Enrollment in lab classes with expansive laboratory spaces will have enrollment determined based on the square footage method. Faculty are required to monitor attendance of students in all on-campus classes. Faculty are asked to monitor students for COVID-19 symptoms and refer students with symptoms to call the College nurse’s office. For all faculty and students that are on a Northeast campus, a physical distancing plan for each in-person class and teaching environment will be developed by the faculty and dean of the area and submitted to the COVID-19 Recovery team for endorsement. Faculty and students are asked to follow appropriate hand hygiene and social distancing of six feet between participants. Faculty, staff and students are expected to wear a face mask while social distancing.

**Synchronous Distance Learning Classes:** Classes that are being taught on-campus as a distance learning synchronous format and will not have students in the origination classroom. The synchronous remote sites could be an extended campus with ten or fewer students or a student’s home or workplace. Appropriate Internet bandwidth is required for a quality experience for the student.
Asynchronous Distance Learning Classes: Classes in this format will use the Canvas learning management system to develop courses based on the Northeast Standards of Design for online classes.

Communication Plan: The COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures document and the Northeast COVID-19 website landing page and associated frequently asked questions will be the primary source of information for employees to find answers to their questions. The website landing page also has a COVID-19 email where additional questions can be asked with a response being provided by the appropriate department. The College will have posted in high traffic areas information about the COVID-19 symptoms and where to find additional resources. The College leadership will provide regular updates to the Northeast community as directives guide adjustments to this procedure.

Supervisors: During phase II of the business continuity plan, department and division meetings are encouraged to continue with virtual meetings. Meetings that can be scheduled in physical spaces may occur with up to 50% of the normal occupancy of the space and allowing for six feet social distancing. Additional guidance for supervisors includes:

1) Staff return to work for one week then rotate to other staff for the next week and continue the rotation based on the number of staff in the department
2) Seek volunteers willing to come back to campus initially.
3) In the event an employee needs an accommodation based on underlying health issues or other high-risk factors, please work with your supervisor and Human Resources in accordance with Administrative Procedure AP-7050.0 “Disabilities and Accommodations Concerning Employment”.
4) Allow those that can effectively work from home to continue to work from home while keeping offices open to the public and sufficiently staffed.
5) Create single occupancy offices or office areas that have appropriate social distancing for employees.
6) Barriers (plexiglass) are to be used where single offices are not feasible and for walk-up counter areas.
7) Face masks or shields are required for all employees, students and visitors when inside a Northeast building.
8) When social distancing is not possible in a workspace, a face mask is required to be worn by employees.
9) Northeast information poster on personal hygiene, social distancing and where to find information on COVID-19 posted in prominent places.

Student Health Services (SHS): The SHS office will develop a Northeast COVID-19 information/resource center in a prominent location of the main campus and each extended campus. The time on campus for the College nurse needs to be reviewed to consider additional hours of operation to serve as a resource to students and as a health care provider. Ensuring appropriate quantities of supplies to care for students are on site and ready for use. SHS along with the residence life staff need to develop a plan for containment of students that exhibit COVID-19 symptoms or become ill while living in student housing. SHS will utilize telehealth
and when necessary will see students by appointment only to reduce exposure between students coming into SHS. The Student Health Nurse will refer students who need to see a doctor to the appropriate health care provider based on the student’s current Northeast location of attendance. A student tracking plan is to be developed for any student that is diagnosed with COVID-19.

**Counseling Services:** The Northeast counseling office will continue to provide telehealth counseling services to students.

**Campus Student Housing:** The Northeast residence life leadership staff will develop a plan based on guidance from the public health department to provide student housing on the Norfolk campus. The plan will be based on a maximum of two students per bathroom and will also reserve appropriate spaces for students that may need to be quarantined for health reasons. Additional elements that will be required of the residence life staff include:

1) Establish physical distancing rules for gathering spaces  
2) Define student cleaning protocols for shared bathroom spaces  
3) Consider closing all common space areas with exception of dining facilities  
4) Post in prominent locations personal hygiene and social distancing posters  
5) Training for staff including RA’s on COVID-19 symptoms and prevention practices  
6) Restrict events and social activities per current social distancing guidelines  
7) Develop a protocol for non-residents entering student housing including outside guests, non-residential staff and others.

**Campus Student Housing Isolation and Quarantine (I&Q):** The residence life leadership staff will identify spaces to service as I&Q spaces for a minimum of 5% of the student population that are living in campus housing that display symptoms or test positive. Additional requirements for the I&Q spaces include:

1) Determine how I&Q spaces will be managed  
2) The rooms should have private bathrooms and students provided with thermometer, sanitizing wipes, tissues, soap and hand sanitizer  
3) I&Q spaces need to have prominent signage and restricted access (Private Quarters or Authorized Personnel Only for example)  
4) Establish protocols for student health services to remotely monitor students in I&Q  
5) Establish plan for meals to be delivered to the I&Q spaces  
6) Students should be able to continue with their classes in a remote learning environment.
**On-Campus Dining Services:** During phase II of the business continuity plan, dining facilities will be available, but it will not be a self-serve buffet style. Additional elements for the food service provider include:

1) Require food service staff and those cleaning tables and chairs to wear face masks  
2) Regular cleaning and sanitizing before, during and after dining hours  
3) Require food service staff to follow infection prevention guidelines including: 
   a. Staying home when ill  
   b. Practicing physical distancing  
   c. Practicing proper hand hygiene  
   d. Avoid touching the eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands  
   e. Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces  
4) Limit the number of individuals dining at one time to ensure proper social distancing  
5) Set tables at least six feet apart  
6) Mark floor with tape to illustrated social distancing at entrance and within the serving area  
7) Eliminate all buffet-style self-serve food and beverage stations and replace with staff-served meal stations  
8) Consider offering a bagged take-out meal  
9) Coordinate with residence life staff to arrange for food delivery to students in isolation and quarantine spaces

**Catering Services:** During phase II, catering will be provided with plated or boxed meals only. All buffet services will be discontinued.

**Athletic Programs:** Northeast will continue to monitor the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) and the Iowa Community College Athletic Conference for guidance on the future of Northeast athletics.

1) Creation of a sub-group of the Northeast Recovery Team to serve as an Athletics COVID-19 Action Team as guided by the Northeast Athletic Director in conjunction with the Recovery Team.  
2) Guidelines to be developed in conjunction with the Northeast Recovery Team include: 
   a. Personal Protective Equipment for athletic trainers and custodial staff

**Northeast Fitness Center and Open Gym:** The fitness center and gym will be open to a maximum of 50% of normal capacity. Appointments are encouraged but not required. The following protocols will be in place during phase II of the business continuity plan:

1) Always employ physical distancing practices  
2) Make sure sanitizing wipes are stocked daily, students and staff are to sanitize equipment before and after each use  
3) Face masks are required.
Community Rental and Hosted Activities and Events: Northeast campuses bring large groups of campus visitors together causing a high risk of exposure of COVID-19. The following protocols are to be followed with community rental and hosted activities and events, including student activities and intramural sports:

1) Gathering spaces such as large labs, classrooms, conference areas and meeting rooms will be limited to 50% of the normal occupancy, while maintaining social distancing of six feet between participants. To determine the number of occupants in a space use 36 square feet per person and the size of the room minus square footage for furniture and equipment in the space.

2) Adjustments to holding or attending large events will be determined based on the current directed health measure for the location of the event.

3) Seating charts will be required to do contact tracking if needed.

4) Standard verbiage is to be shared with groups:
   a. Prior to the group coming on campus:

Northeast Community College is committed to assisting in minimizing the risk of COVID-19 to our students, visitors and employees. We are working closely with local public health districts to ensure safety at our facilities. During this time, we ask that you follow social distancing guidelines, avoid close contact with people who are sick, cover your sneeze or cough with a tissue, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, wear a face mask or face covering, stay home if you are sick, and wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Northeast is continuously cleaning and disinfecting surfaces to reduce the spread of germs.

We ask that participants/presenters not attend if they have had a fever within the last 72 hours, cough, chills, muscle pain, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, sore throat new loss of taste or smell, or have come into contact with someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days.

b. Before event starts while group is on campus:

Northeast Community College is committed to assisting in minimizing the risk of COVID-19 to our students, visitors and employees. We are working closely with local public health districts to ensure safety at our facilities. During this time, we ask that all students and visitors at Northeast follow social distancing guidelines, cover your sneeze or cough with a tissue, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, wear a face mask or face, and wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Northeast is continuously cleaning and disinfecting surfaces to reduce the spread of germs. Hand sanitizer is available at multiple locations throughout the facility, if needed.
If you have had a fever within the last 72 hours, cough, chills, muscle pain, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, sore throat new loss of taste or smell, or have come into contact with someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days we ask that you self-identify so we can to find an alternate attendance option and please excuse yourself.

c. Statements for groups off-campus that Northeast is facilitating:

Northeast Community College is committed to assisting in minimizing the risk of COVID-19 to our students, visitors and employees. During this time, we ask that all participants follow social distancing guidelines, cover your sneeze or cough with a tissue, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, wear a face mask or face covering and wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

If you have had a fever within the last 72 hours, cough, chills, muscle pain, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, sore throat new loss of taste or smell, or have come into contact with someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days we ask that you self-identify so we can to find an alternate attendance option and please excuse yourself.
ADDENDUM

COVID-19 Positive Case Protocols

These protocols outline Northeast Community College’s response should a COVID-19 case be diagnosed on the College’s premises or if there is a spread within the college community. These protocols also include the continuity of education and research if there is a community spread of COVID-19 and address concerns related to COVID-19 associated stigma.
Resources


Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. [http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx](http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx).
Resource Documents:
*ELVPHD Attendance Exclusion Health and Return Criteria PDF (8/4/20)
*ELVPHD Illness Flowchart PDF (8/4/20)

Northeast Nebraska Public Health District. [https://nnphd.org/](https://nnphd.org/).
North Central Nebraska Public Health District. [https://ncdhdne.wordpress.com/](https://ncdhdne.wordpress.com/).
Northeast’s Response to COVID-19 on Campus

Source- Visual from CDC resource; (Decision Tree page 3 of 10)

1. **Reporting a Case in the College Community**
   a. Once an individual is aware that they have been formally tested and diagnosed as a positive case of COVID-19, they need to notify their next level supervisor (if an employee) or (students would report to their appropriate instructor and/or applicable program chair/ Deans’ office). An individual from the public that determines they were positive with COVID-19 while on campus, should contact the Director of Safety and Emergency Preparedness.
      i. If an employee receives a report from a student or supervisee; they should notify their supervisor or their designee in a documented report via e-mail and/or occurrence report for OSHA requirements. Include the Director of Safety and Emergency Preparedness or designee on all reports for student and/or individual from public report(s).
      ii. For employee related cases, employees should contact their supervisor and include the Human Resources (HR) office; Director of Human Resources, Talent and HR Compliance or designee. HR will disseminate report to Director of Safety and Emergency Preparedness as necessary or appropriate in compliance with OSHA.
   b. Reports should be made as soon as possible/practicable.
   c. Reports should be made in a confidential manner to protect the identity of the individual who has a positive or presumptive COVID-19 diagnosis.
   d. Communication plan will be made as directed by local/area public health officials.

2. **Confirmed person(s) with COVID-19 on Campus:**
   a. Assess Risk
      i. Coordinate with local public health officials; they will assist College administrators to determine a course of action for the campus.
      ii. Work with local public health officials to determine cancellation of classes and closure of buildings and facilities (2-5 days) of all college buildings and facilities are needed. In some cases, events and activities will be cancelled to allow time to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation impacting the campus.
      iii. These closure timeframes will be made on a case-by-case basis using the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 and the specific cases in the college community.
      iv. Continue social distancing for those who are still on campus.
   b. Short (potential 2-5 day) class suspension, building and facility closure to clean/disinfect/contact tracing in consultation with local health officials.
   c. Determine if there is or is not a college community spread from exposure.
   d. Follow steps based on college community spread.
   e. Determine appropriate phase transition based on the COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).
f. Follow procedures for individuals who are sick on campus/quarantine. Require those who are sick off campus to stay home.
g. Ensure health clinics prepare for COVID-19 in coordination with local public health officials.
h. Communicate regularly with students, staff and faculty in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines (Section 4).
i. Follow ADA protocols to protect individuals who are at high risk of COVID-19 and ensure continuity of safe housing. Consider extending in-person class suspension.

3. Return to Work/Class Exclusion Criteria
   a. Once a student or employee is excluded from the college environment, they may return if they satisfy the recommendations of the CDC. Currently (as of 7/17/20) those guidelines are:
      i. **Untested with symptoms:** Persons who have not received a COVID-19 test but experience any of the “Core/Minimum” symptoms (Fever of 100.4 or greater, cough, shortness of breath) may return if the following three conditions are met:
         • Ten (10) calendar days have passed since symptoms first appeared, and
         • Other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved); and
         • They have not had a fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use medicine that reduces fevers) OR Student or employee may also return if they are approved to do so in writing by the student or employee’s health care provider eliminating the diagnosis of COVID-19 (i.e. alternative diagnosis).

      ii. **Tested with symptoms:**
         a. **Tested positive with symptoms:** Persons who experience any of the ‘Core/Minimum” symptoms (Fever of 100.4 or greater, cough, shortness of breath), have been tested for COVID-19 and are found to be positive, may return to the College if the following three conditions are met:
            • Ten (10) calendar days have passed since symptoms first appeared, and
            • Other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved); and
            • They have not had a fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use medicine that reduces fevers) OR Student or employee may also return if they are approved to do so in writing by the student or employee’s health care provider eliminating the diagnosis of COVID-19 (i.e. alternative diagnosis).

         b. **Tested negative with symptoms:** Persons who experience any of the “Core/Minimum” symptoms must isolate / quarantine until the following conditions are met:
            • Ten (10) calendar days have passed since symptoms first appeared, and
• Other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved); and
• They have not had a fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use medicine that reduces fevers) This protocol may change in the absence of Directed Health Measures. OR Student or employee may also return if they are approved to do so in writing by the student or employee’s health care provider eliminating the diagnosis of COVID-19 (i.e. alternative diagnosis).

ii. **Tested Positive with no symptoms:** Persons who have not had symptoms but test positive for COVID-19 may return to the College when the following two conditions are met:

- Ten (10) calendar days have passed since COVID-19 positive test date, and
- Have had no symptom development OR Student or employee may also return if they are approved to do so in writing by the student or employee’s health care provider eliminating the diagnosis of COVID-19 (i.e. alternative diagnosis).

4. **Communication Plan**
   a. Communications should be in line with local public health official standards and recommendations.
   b. Plan to include messages to counter potential stigma and discrimination of individual(s).
   c. All college communications should be made only as necessary or deemed appropriate by local public health officials’ recommendations.
   d. Regarding circumstances where there is a confirmed COVID-19 case that has been on any Northeast campus, it is critical to maintain confidentiality of the student or employee as required by ADA and FERPA as applicable.
   e. FERPA training for all employees will be provided through the SafeColleges learning management system (LMS) in August of 2020.

5. **Residence Life (Residence Life Staff)**
   a. Ensure continuity of safe housing.
   b. Work in close collaboration with local public health officials to make all decisions related to on-campus housing.
      a. Standard Operating Procedures will be followed for Residence Life.
      c. Ensure continuity of mental health services for residence life; help counter stigma and promote resilience on campus.

6. **Substantial College Community Transmission**

   Additional strategies should be considered when there is substantial transmission of COVID-19 in the local college community, in addition to those implemented when there is no minimal or moderate transmission.

August 5, 2020

COVID-19 Positive Case Protocols
These strategies include:
a. Continue to coordinate with local public health officials. If local health officials have determined there is substantial transmission of COVID-19 within the college community, they will provide guidance to administrators on the best course of action for the College.
b. Determine appropriate phase transition based on the COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).
c. Cleaning plan as referenced in the SOP.
d. Consider extended in-person class suspension. In collaboration with local public health officials, implement extended class suspension and event/activity cancellations (e.g., suspension/cancellations for longer than two weeks).
e. A long-term and possibly broader-reaching strategy is intended to slow transmission rates of COVID-19 in the college community.
f. During extended class suspensions, consideration should be given to cancel extracurricular group activities and large events.