

RSO Considerations for Off-Campus Shared Housing During COVID-19

We are excited to be together for the Fall semester! To do so safely and efficiently, we are planning for every possible scenario. We've created this resource to help you in maintaining health and safety in your RSO Registered Student Organization (RSO) off-campus housing facility during our current situation. For resources regarding meetings and events, please refer to [RSO Considerations for Planning an Event](#).

State and Federal Guidelines: Michigan Technological University will adhere to state and federal guidelines related to event size, public gatherings, and health and safety protocol. As you've already experienced, these guidelines can change rapidly and will require us to remain flexible and have a plan A, B, and C for your RSO housing. The [health and safety levels](#) that will guide our actions are as follows:

- Level 1 - *Face-to-face instruction and limited physical distancing (primarily in-person meetings and events)*
- Level 2 - *Mixed-modality instruction and moderate physical distancing (hybrid of in-person and virtual meetings and events)*
- Level 3 - *Mixed-modality instruction and physical distancing (virtual meetings and events encouraged)*
- Level 4 - *Mixed-modality instruction and high physical distancing (primarily virtual meetings and events)*
- Level 5 - *Remote instruction and limited campus activity (virtual meetings and events only)*

Outline of MTU Flex: Plan to Return to Campus:

On Monday, July 27, Michigan Tech successfully completed the Return to Campus Plan and transitioned to the [Health and Safety Levels](#) system that will be utilized moving forward. This fall, behavior and operations at Michigan Tech will be guided by these [Health and Safety Levels](#). These levels provide the university with the agility to respond to COVID-19 on campus and in the local community in real time with scientifically informed, practical, and targeted steps.

Summary of Safety Practice Expectations (As of July 31, 2020):

- *Face coverings - Everyone on campus must wear a face covering in all indoor spaces and enclosed public spaces, including campus buildings and open workspaces. Face coverings must also be worn outdoors during activities where physical distancing cannot be maintained.*
 - *Physical distancing - Stay at least six feet (about two arms' length) from other people at all times, modify personal greetings to maintain separation (no handshakes or hugging), and stay out of crowded places and avoid large gatherings.*
 - *Symptom tracking - Everyone is required to complete the symptom tracker daily on campus, including all visitors/guests.*
 - *In-person meetings/events are allowed as permitted by local, state, and federal restrictions and should not exceed 50% of a room's capacity, with everyone maintaining six feet of separation as required for physical distancing. In addition, group gatherings are limited to a maximum of 10 people indoors and 150 people outdoors.*
 - *Additional personal safety practices are outlined [here](#) and additional information on campus environments can be found [here](#).*
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Registered Student Organization Off-Campus Shared Housing:

Living in off-campus housing, especially with numerous housemates/organization members, carries some risk of contracting pandemic diseases as well as common seasonal illnesses such as the flu. However, there are many activities that, if incorporated into daily habits, can improve healthy living conditions for living off-campus. Knowing how COVID-19 is spread, and understanding the preventative steps needed to slow the spread, can help housemates/members avoid contracting and preventing the transmission of infectious diseases to others. These same activities apply not only to COVID-19, but also prevent transmission of common viruses, bacteria, fungi, and parasites that could result in disease. By employing common sense and practicing some simple measures, housing facilities can remain safe and healthy.

Creating and maintaining a healthy housing environment will require a disciplined and sustained commitment by all housemates/members. It is critical that we all take the COVID-19 concerns seriously, form positive habits to help protect you and those around you and in your community, and to be sure to follow all mandates and recommendations from our university, state, and federal public health agencies.

RSO planning will be moving forward in accordance with the current campus level - that status can be found [here](#). To begin planning for Fall 2020, please use Level 3 as a starting point. With that in mind, please review the following considerations and note that all students are required to follow all current university health & safety expectations.

Shared Housing Guidance

- [CDC - Living in Shared Housing](#)
- [CDC - COVID-19 Guidance for Shared or Congregate Housing](#)

Housing Status and Communication

- During periods of increased physical-distancing to slow community spread according to local health officials, limit access to the organization facility to members, organization advisors (including Housing Corporation Officers), employees, and restrict open access to anyone not directly affiliated with the RSO. (Especially important when the university is at level 4 or 5)
- Social gatherings are discouraged at this time, including in-person recruitment events as well as annual traditions, in accordance with the Health and Safety Levels.
- Everyone that enters the facility should adhere to facility expectations including hand sanitizing, masks, capacity limitations, and physical distancing.
- If possible, restrict to a single point of main entry to facilitate [symptom](#) monitoring and guest tracking. The university symptom monitoring form flow chart can be found [here](#).
- Place COVID-19 warning signs/posters on the outside of doors and entryways advising that persons entering the housing facility do so at their own risk. It is recommended that you include that they comply with your safety prevention steps as a condition to enter the housing facility.

- Widely make use of free [CDC downloadable COVID-19 guidance posters](#) and [university signage](#) (or similar) and display in common areas of the housing facility where they will serve as reminders to members/guests to engage in safe practices and develop recommended healthy habits.
- Modify space configurations to maintain physical distancing (entries, member rooms, social spaces, etc.) and post occupancy limit signage for the facility, as well as each room, so others know the limits.
- Consider adding virtual meetings and events to your plan to increase the opportunities for your RSO to meet and do business in a safe and effective manner.

Health and Safety Procedures

- Place hand sanitizer stations and extra facemasks at all entrances. Require all people to disinfect their hands immediately upon entry into your housing facility.
- Invest in extra facemasks and keep them at all entrances. Require all guests to wear a mask while in the housing facility and while attending RSO meetings/activities.
- Consider investing in No-Contact Infrared Thermometers (NCITs) and train members on proper use and storage.
- Develop a screening and entrance policy. Consider using a symptom monitoring form and/or use an NCIT to screen all members/guests at the entryway for a temperature of 100.4 °F [38 °C] or greater (in accordance with the CDC).
- Place a sign-in sheet at each entryway and require non-resident members and all guests to sign-in each time they enter the housing facility. Maintain all sign-in sheets in a secure location and provide disinfectant for all materials used at sign-in.
- Restrict and/or stagger the number of people allowed at one time in common areas such as dining rooms, kitchens, bathrooms, TV/game rooms, libraries, common study areas, and general meeting rooms to ensure everyone can maintain physical distancing guidance (6 feet apart) based on room size/capacity.
- Consider having members living in the facility monitor their symptoms, take their temperature twice a day and self-report a temperature indicating a fever (exceeding 100.4° F).
- Restrict and/or stagger the number of people eating meals at one time to ensure everyone can maintain physical distancing guidance.
- Restrict/limit the number of non-resident members allowed in the facility at a given time to ensure room capacity restrictions and physical distancing can be maintained.
- Switch meals from buffet or family self-serve style meal service to volunteer-served or individual plate serving. Practice physical distancing and use floor marking to separate diners when in serving lines. Eliminate use of shared salt and pepper shakers, condiment containers such as ketchup or mustard bottles, milk containers, bulk cereal boxes, and switch to individually packaged serving portions.
- Consider purchasing extra inventory of [PPE](#), disposable masks, disinfectant supplies, hand sanitizer stations refills, garbage bags, regular cleaning supplies, disposable nitrile gloves in various sizes, eye protection for members that clean common areas, kitchen, and food service supplies.

Routine and Deep Cleaning - [CDC Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting](#)

- Select and use proper disinfectants for the surface/item being disinfected. Consider contact time, shelf life, dilution factor, and product safety. An EPA list of COVID19 disinfectants can be found [here](#).
- Disinfect all housing facility common area surfaces daily - paying special attention to all frequently touched surfaces, such as tables, chairs, doorknobs, on top and under drawer pulls, light switches, handles, entry keypads, handrails, faucets and sinks, and other surfaces that are frequently touched.
- Remember to disinfectant the floors and floor mats regularly, especially at all housing facility entrances.
- At least once a week, vacuum carpets, rugs, and upholstery (on top and under removable cushions). Only use a HEPA filtered vacuum cleaner. Other types of vacuums can create a significant amount of dust which can be breathed in and may carry infectious pathogens. If the vacuum bag or compartment is over half full, empty before vacuuming.
- For electronics, such as phones, tablets, touch screens, remote controls and keyboards, follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products. Consider use of water-resistant, wipeable covers for electronics. If no manufacturer guidance is available, consider the use of alcohol-based wipes or spray containing at least 70% alcohol to disinfect touch screens. Dry surfaces thoroughly to avoid pooling of liquids.
- Require RSO members who reside in the housing facility to follow the cleaning and disinfecting guidelines for their individual rooms daily as well.
- Regularly check ventilation and HVAC systems within the housing facility, ensure filters are cleaned/replaced regularly, and when possible open windows to allow fresh air circulation and consider installing air purifiers in common areas.
- Remove magazines, newspapers, pens, and other frequently shared items that are not easily disinfected. Potentially-infectious pathogens may be present and transfer from person to person with repeated use.

Isolation and Quarantine Procedures - [Western UP Health Department: You Were Tested, Now What?](#)

- Make sure members with underlying health issues are looked after and strongly encourage them to take appropriate measures to protect themselves and make them aware of any instances where members may be sick, are self-quarantining, or have come into contact with others with COVID-19 symptoms.
- Your RSO should consider developing a written COVID-19 contingency protocol plan that outlines steps that may be taken in the event that a member contracts COVID-19 and must be isolated or quarantined either within or outside the housing facility.
- Consider purchasing supplies and pre-emptively assembling dedicated isolation kits to be readily available should a member need to be [isolated](#). These kits could include masks, gloves, disinfectant wipes, NCITs, tissues, paper towels, wastebasket and extra liners, etc.
- Provide sick members with information on [how to care for themselves](#) and [when to seek medical attention](#).

- If possible, make adjustments so that the sick person has access to a designated bathroom that can be restricted to their use only. If that is not possible, ensure that the bathroom is cleaned after every use.
- Follow the [CDC recommendations](#) and [health department](#) recommendations for determining next steps and suggested actions whenever members become ill or show signs of fever, or contract COVID-19.
- Be aware of [HIPAA or FERPA](#) privacy protections for member's health information and never publicly announce an individual's COVID-19 status or other health issues to others without their permission.

Member Involvement

- Focus on prevention - educate all members on the importance of following all COVID-19 guidance measures and organization protocols for themselves and guests.
- Select a responsible and respected member to serve as the point person for all COVID-19 related guidance.
- Consider developing an RSO health policy to address when members feel sick, have a temperature, or have been known to come into direct contact with persons that have tested positive from COVID-19 to self-quarantine, follow health guidance protocols, and advise the RSO's COVID-19 guidance officer accordingly.
- Require all members and guests to practice physical distancing and do not allow events to take place with more than the allowed number of people as mandated by local public health guidance measures.
- Make sure all members understand the safety policies, cleaning schedule, and physical distancing requirements of the housing facility.
- Encourage self-care. Focus on taking care of yourself, making good choices, supporting each other, and respecting others. And wash your hands!

Additional Resources

- James R. Favor & Company, LLC - Breaking the Chain of Infection - [Guidance for a Healthful Living Environment for Fraternity & Sorority Chapters](#)
- Holmes Murphy - [Considerations from ACHA for Reopening in the COVID-19 Era May 2020](#)
- Holmes Murphy - [Opening Checklist: COVID-19](#)
- ISSA - [Cleaning and Disinfecting for the Coronavirus \(SARS-CoV-2\)](#)
- LA County Public Health - [Social Distancing and Bed Position for Residential and Congregate Settings](#)
- MJ Sorority - [Cleaning Guidelines for Your Chapter Facility](#)