

## CAMPUS OPERATIONS SUB-WORKING GROUP – FACILITIES

### COVID-19 – Health and Safety Guidelines – Plexiglass Barriers

#### **Preamble**

This document provides guidance for departments that may wish to consider installation of Plexiglass barriers.

#### **Prevention Planning Considerations**

In keeping with the hierarchy of controls, please refer to the [Queen's Return to Campus Guidelines](#), prior to considering the installation of barriers, departments should first consider if there are other workplace alterations and workflow changes that can be implemented to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Questions that can be asked include:

- Do you *really* need to deliver in-person client service?
  - Now is a great time to review your service delivery model.
  - Have you considered the long-term presence of COVID-19?
  - Can you deliver the needed service via email, telephone, or remote meeting needs? (When did you last speak to a bank teller or the municipal tax clerk in person?)
  - Are you able to reduce the density of people in the space to maintain physical distancing and reduce the need for barriers?
  - Consider the traffic flow
    - Required distancing, signage for clients who are waiting
    - One-way traffic flow when corridors, stairs are narrow
  - Maintain a 2m separation between clients and all your staff
    - May require routing of clients
    - Think about marking the floor with required distances.

#### **When to use barriers**

Barriers may play a role when no other means can be used to maintain physical distancing and you are delivering in-person client services where employees will frequently be within 2 m (6ft) of co-workers, customers, clients, or others for longer than a brief interaction.

#### **Materials and Dimensions**

When determining what will be the best barrier for the application, consider the following:

- Barriers can be made of any material that produces a shield for droplets that can be expelled when a person coughs or sneezes.
- Barriers may be opaque or clear as fits the application
  - Client service location barriers should be clear to allow visibility
  - Other areas may be extensions to cubicle walls or additional opaque or clear panels
- Clear barriers should be created from minimum 1/4" thick polycarbonate, Plexiglass, acrylic, or other similar material.
- Barriers must be large enough to create an effective barrier between the breathing zones of the people on each side
- Barriers should be designed or selected to accommodate the heights of the range of people who will likely be near it. Particular attention should be paid to situations where one person is standing while the other may be seated.

- Openings should be provided at counter height to allow point of sale terminals, paperwork (did you *really* need that paper?) and other exchanges to take place
- Be mindful of the effect of the barrier on vocal communication
  - Depending on conditions you may need a protected speaking opening or an intercom

### **Installation**

- Barriers should be securely installed and be of a quality that will last without significant maintenance for at least 2 years.
- Free standing barriers must be stable to ensure they will not fall.
- Ideally barriers will be furniture mounted. While ceiling-grid-mounted units are available they are discouraged since it is not easy to tell what additional weight the grid may support.
- Barriers must stop short of the ceiling to allow fire detection, sprinklers and ventilation systems to do their job. Normally a gap of 24" is required
- The use and installation of a barrier cannot impact an individual's egress from the location or area in the event of an emergency.
- If there are any concerns regarding the installation of the barrier or its potential impact on life safety and building systems, you must consult with PPS (Fix-it ext. 77301) and the Department of Environmental Health & Safety (ext. 32999 or safety at queensu.ca)

### **Installation in Vehicles**

Prior to the installation of barrier in vehicles, you must first ensure there are no other alternate arrangements that can be made that eliminates the need for multiple people to travel in the same vehicle. If it is determined that a barrier needs to be installed in a vehicle the following must be considered:

- Barriers should be installed in such a way that the vehicle remains in safe operating condition in accordance with the Highway Traffic Act and regulations and the Occupational Health & Safety Act, as applicable.
- The barrier is mounted in a manner that will ensure that it will not injure a vehicle occupant in the event there is an accident.
- The barrier will not impede the occupant's ability to exit the vehicle if their door becomes unusable
- The barrier does not obstruct or obscure the driver's vision or impede the safe operation of the vehicle.

### **Cleaning and Maintenance**

The cleaning and disinfecting process in the department must include barriers. The entire barrier needs to be cleaned daily to prevent the accumulation and transmission of contaminants.

Barriers with openings that people pass materials through should be included in the list of commonly touched surfaces and cleaned more frequently.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for both the barrier and the cleaning product being used. It is important to ensure the cleaning process will not result in damage or degradation to the barrier.

### **Procurement**

Information on barrier suppliers is available from procurement's [webpage](#).