



# **Returning to the Arboretum:**

## **SAFETY PROTOCOLS & IMPORTANT RETURNING TO WORK INFORMATION**

July 17, 2020

Revised April 19, 2021

**Prepared and submitted by the System Office Return to the Arboretum Planning Group**

**(This plan is subject to change based on the emergence of further information.)**



*System Office (SO) Team:*

*The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged us all and pushed us beyond the limits of what we once thought possible. We have found new ways to communicate and be productive, even when we are apart. I continue to be very proud to be a part of such a resilient team. The pandemic has changed who we are both personally and professionally, and I have no doubt that many of those changes will remain with us in the future. As we look to the future, I would like to take this opportunity to provide this plan presented on behalf of the Return to the Arboretum (RtA) planning group made up of your peers noted below. This plan is the result of months of work and the outcomes from their recommendations.*

*The RtA planning group was charged to work from the following set of general assumptions:*

- *The health and safety of our team and of our community is paramount;*
- *Our System Office team is comprised of individual people who have families, obligations, and concerns that must be considered in our planning;*
- *We don't know all that we need to know to form a full plan for our return to the Arboretum, but we know enough to begin the work, communicate, and make adjustments along the way for a safe return;*
- *We must communicate effectively and abundantly in planning and implementing our return;*
- *Our return, once initiated, will likely be gradual to promote employee and community safety and will give consideration to such factors as:*
  - *Members of the team who require special accommodation;*
  - *Positions that are substantially hindered by working remotely;*
  - *Individual team member's needs;*
  - *Our need to keep team members physically distant within existing workspaces;*
- *Planning for our return also means working closely with our building's owner, to ensure proper cleaning and sanitation of our work environment;*
- *Our plan may require various benchmarks to determine speed, progress, pause, and retreat;*
- *The development of our plan requires the expertise and input of multiple teams and viewpoints within the System Office;*
- *In returning to the Arboretum, we will not return to the way that we went about conducting business and interaction prior to the pandemic.*

*While dates are always subject to change, we expect a phased and flexible return to the Arboretum starting no earlier than **June 14, 2021**. We will be taking guidance from public health officials and from our Governor. Flexibility and accommodations will be made for those with childcare needs and health conditions. Expect future surveys and town halls to continue gathering your input and to share critical information. This plan reflects these principles. While COVID-19 is still not over, we hope that our plan provides a way for us to safely manage working in this new normal. We will continue to provide updates as things change.*

Thank you for all of your efforts.

Craig

**Craig Herndon, Ph.D.**

Senior Vice Chancellor for Administration, Finance, and Technology

**Return to Arboretum Planning Group Members**

Bert Jones – Co-chair  
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## Workplace Safety - What We've Done to Ensure a Safe Work Environment

### Our Building

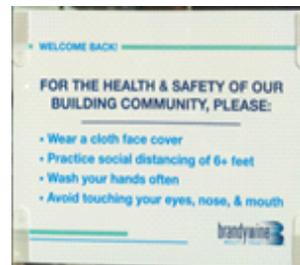
Now and when we eventually do return to the Arboretum, the health and well-being of our staff is our number one priority. Please be sure to read [A Safe & Smooth Return to the Workplace with Brandywine Realty Trust](#) to learn what Brandywine, our landlord, is doing to prioritize the health, safety and security of tenants. The key here is that protocols are being put in place to enhance our safety. All offices, common areas, conference rooms, and restrooms will be cleaned and disinfected regularly.

### Personal Protection

The System Office (SO) will require employees and visitors to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice safe hygiene measures by washing hands and cleaning their work spaces. The SO has ordered a kit for each employee that provides two face coverings, a bottle of hand sanitizer, and a small pack of alcohol wipes for their use. Disinfectant wipes, cleaning solutions, and paper towels have been ordered and received to assist employees with additional cleaning needs during the workday outside of the scheduled Brandywine cleaning schedule.

### Signage

Signs requiring the use of face coverings to enter the main building and the VCCS offices are posted. Additional signage has been added at all common spaces and meeting rooms.



### Facility Needs

Facility Management Services (FMS) is available to assist with temporarily reassigning employees to other working spaces if at least six (6) feet is not available between employees or as a needed accommodation. FMS is also available to answer questions around space management as needed.

Brandywine has provided all restrooms with anti-bacterial soap and all Departments will be provided with a variety of disinfecting material, hand sanitizers, sprays and wipes to allow for adequate cleanliness. Areas with open cubicles which require interaction are being provided with clear barriers to provide separation from visitors.

### Monitoring

We will continue to monitor any issues of COVID-19 illness that arise and determine if adjustments need to be made to the plan, including going back to full telework or adjusting as required by the Governor's directives if cases in Virginia spike again.

### Communication

Staying informed is important. The SO will communicate updates on the Return to Arboretum plan and other important information through a variety of platforms.

- We will host a virtual Town Hall to share the plan and answer questions.
- Signs are posted as reminders.
- Look for updates on the SO TVs located within the VCCS work areas.
- A dedicated page will be established on Buzz2 for all information, training, and links to articles or organizations as employee resources.
- Additional surveys and opportunities to share employee feedback will be provided.

- Emails and notifications will be provided prior to each return wave.
- Training for employees on safety protocols and manager training will be provided.
- The VCCS Emergency Alert system can also be utilized to share information quickly.

## Employees and Visitors

We will use a variety of methods to assure safety for employees and visitors within the VCCS sections of the Arboretum.

- We will utilize the badge card reader system to help know which employees are in the building at a given time. If a suspected case of COVID-19 is reported, we will work with the Virginia Department of Health to notify any employees who might have had any contact.
- Visitors should use Greetly, our virtual receptionist, to inform our employees of their arrival. Visitors must follow all protocols outlined by Brandywine Realty Trust and the VCCS, including wearing a face covering, practicing social distancing, and filling out the Mandatory VCCS System Office Visitation and Health Screening Form (Health Screening Form) any time they plan to come to the Arboretum. They will be instructed to contact the VCCS if they come down with COVID-19 or are required to quarantine due to a potential exposure so we can alert our employees.
- Employees who expect to receive visitors should inform the visitor to review the safety requirements on the VCCS website at <https://www.vccs.edu/covid-19/>.
- Visitors must have completed the Health Screening Form prior to arrival. After the visitor leaves, notify Kelly Hockaday in Human Resources at [khockaday@vccs.edu](mailto:khockaday@vccs.edu) of the times and locations where the visitor was in the building, e.g. conference room number, office, number, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor women's restroom, etc.
- Unscheduled visitors will also have to complete the Health Screening Form.

## Employee Responsibility

We are doing all we can to help provide for a safe return; but all employees have a part in ensuring a safe and healthy work environment. Employees will be expected to follow the safety requirements as outlined. We will evaluate and address repeated and willful violations under the standards of conduct expectations and existing policies.

## What You Can Do – Employee Expectations

### Be Informed

Employees should read and follow directions given in communications. If there is something you don't understand, ask your manager or supervisor. These protocols have been put into place to help keep you, your families, and your coworkers as safe as possible while at work.

### Self-Assessment Questions and Reporting

**Health Screening Form:** Employees will be asked to read and complete the Health Screening Form anytime they intend to work at the building.

- If you answer Yes to any of the screening questions, do not come to the Arboretum.
- Employees who feel ill should not come to work. Additionally, employees who become ill at work should report this to the supervisor and return home immediately.

### Notifications

- Employees and visitors who test positive for the virus must contact Jennie Kim at [jkim@vccs.edu](mailto:jkim@vccs.edu) immediately so we can provide appropriate notifications and assist with coordinating your leave options. Do NOT come to the Arboretum.

- Employees and visitors who have tested positive and those who may have come in contact with the infected person cannot return to the Arboretum for either 10 days or until they test negative for the virus twice in a row.
- If you or someone in your household experiences COVID-19 like symptoms – including fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, or sudden loss of taste or smell – contact your health provider and notify your supervisor – Do NOT come to the Arboretum.
- If you have come in contact with someone with COVID-19 or who is required to quarantine due to a potential contact, inform your supervisor and Jennie Kim at [jkim@vccs.edu](mailto:jkim@vccs.edu) immediately so we can provide appropriate notifications and assist with coordinating your leave options. Do NOT come to the Arboretum.
- If are feeling ill with non COVID-19 symptoms, do NOT come to the Arboretum. Contact your manager to determine if your situation allows for telework or if you should take sick leave for that day. If you are ill and cannot work remotely, report your illness as normal and account for is as you normally would under the normal sick leave policies. If you report to work ill or become ill, your manager can ask you to leave the premises.

### Notifications related to COVID-19 cases and Return to work

- We will notify employees who may have been exposed to individuals who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or who may have been exposed and are pending testing.
- Employees who contract COVID-19 will remain home and in quarantine in accordance with CDC Guidelines and with 16VAC25-220, Emergency Standard, Infectious Disease Prevention.
- All Departments are responsible for providing the VCCS Returning to the Arboretum Protocols to all contractors, sub-contractors and companies that provide contract or temporary employees and assure compliance with these protocols
- Antibody testing will not be used to make decisions about employees return to work or to make decisions concerning employees who were previously classified as known or suspected to be infected
- Employees who are known to have been infected with COVID-19 and are asymptomatic shall only return to work in compliance with CDC Guidelines and the requirements of 16VAC25-220, Emergency Temporary Standard, Infectious Disease Prevention. At this time, this means that employees cannot return to the Arboretum for at least 10 days or have two negative tests for the virus.

### Face Coverings

A cloth or paper mask is required in the building including when walking in hallways, using the restroom or elevator or taking the stairs. The VCCS will supply two face coverings to every employee. You are welcome to wear your own if you prefer as long as it covers the nose and mouth. Do not put the face covering up on your forehead or around your neck. Do not wear the face covering on one ear or pull the face covering down while you are speaking. When you return home, wash your face covering as directed by the CDC.



The requirement to wear a face covering does not apply to the following:

- If you are working alone in your office. If someone approaches and is not at least six (6) feet away, the face covering must be worn.
- While eating or drinking.
- When exercising or using exercise equipment.
- Any person who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitate, or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.
- Persons with health conditions that prohibit wearing a face covering.
- See Executive Order 63 (2020) for other exceptions.
- Requests to the Department for religious waivers from the required use of respirators, surgical/medical procedure masks, or face coverings will be handled in accordance with the requirements of applicable federal

and state law, standards, regulations and the U.S. and Virginia Constitutions, after Department consultation with the Office of the Attorney General.

### **Social Distancing**

- Employees need to follow social distancing guidelines including maintaining six (6) feet between others and not gathering in groups. If you cannot social distance, you must wear a face covering.
- Stay within your designated work area as much as possible and limit visits to other parts of the building to essential business needs only.

### **Cleaning your work area**

In addition to the standard cleaning Brandywine will be conducting, employees are expected to clean their personal work area at least daily, such as your workstations, tables and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents provided and follow the directions on the label. Also, if you should cough or sneeze on a surface, ensure to disinfect immediately. Additional information on proper disinfecting procedures will be provided prior to our return to Arboretum date.

- Employees are responsible for cleaning and disinfecting
  - Their individual work area (office , cubicle)
  - Desks and tables
  - Chairs
  - Phones
  - Computers

### **Returning items from home**

Employees will need to remember to bring back any items and equipment when they return. Equipment and electronics should be cleaned and sanitized prior to return.

### **Good Hygiene**

- Employees should wash their hands when they come to work, frequently during the day, especially prior to eating, and before you leave.
- Do not shake hands or engage in physical contact with others.
- Avoid touching your face – eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clean your hands often, with soap and water for a least 20 seconds or with alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60-95% alcohol.
- Cover mouth/nose if sneeze/cough with a tissue or elbow/shoulder – not your hand.

### **Self-Care**

While it was important before, taking care of one's self during these stressful and challenging times is even more important. **Whether teleworking or in office**, employees are encouraged to ensure they are taking proper care of their health including following these tips:

- Go outside for physical activity (make sure to follow social distancing and face covering as needed).
- Make sure to stand and stretch.
- Look away from the computer periodically to help reduce eye strain.
- Make sure to take at least a 10-15 minute break in the morning and afternoon.
- Make sure to take a lunch break.
- Stay hydrated.
- Schedule meetings for 45-50 minutes instead of 60 to allow employees time between meetings to take a quick break.
- Remember our Employee Assistance Program is here for you. Information on how to access benefits is located in the Appendix.

## Returning to the Arboretum

The SO plans on reopening in waves starting **no sooner than June 14, 2021**. Each wave period is estimated to last six to eight weeks and is subject to change based on guidance from the Governor and public health officials.

- **Wave 1** – This wave will be for employees who volunteer to return full or part-time to the Arboretum. Survey data shows this to be approximately 30 employees. Employees who have indicated that they are interested in returning during Wave 1 should contact their supervisors and Bert Jones ([bjones@vccs.edu](mailto:bjones@vccs.edu)) so that plans can be made. Wave 1 is targeted to begin June 14, 2021.
- **Wave 2** – This wave will include additional volunteers and employees who feel working in the office will benefit their work performance and/or may have technology challenges at home. If you fall into this category, please contact your supervisor. Wave 2 supervisors should develop lists and justifications by **July 16, 2021** and email them to your department head and Bert Jones ([bjones@vccs.edu](mailto:bjones@vccs.edu)). Wave 2 is targeted for August.
- **Wave 3** – During wave 3, the remaining employees will return to work at the Arboretum, with the exception of those who qualify for accommodations or need additional flexibility in their work schedules due to health or childcare concerns. Wave 3 will occur 6-8 weeks after wave 2 and details will be provided later in the summer.

All other employees will return to the Arboretum during Wave 3. The mode of return will be as recommended by the Distributed Workplace Taskforce. It is important to note that there may be some employees who will not be able to return at all until a vaccine or health concerns subside, or cannot return full-time in the office until K-12 schools go back to normal schedule.

## Confidentiality

It is important to note that during these processes, supervisors, managers or with other employees may become privy to sensitive or medical information of other employees. This information is expected to remain confidential and only be shared with appropriate Human Resources personnel for compliance requirements or to support the employee.

## Accommodations

Employees in each phase will be able to confidentially request accommodations due to their own personal underlying health issue as guided by the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). Beyond that, requests for modifications will be prioritized for those who are at higher risk for severe illness as well as anyone with a household member at higher risk. Outside of those categories, supervisors will make every effort to grant reasonable modification requests for childcare/school reasons or other. Detailed information will be provided on the process to request an accommodation for Waves 2 & 3.

## Common Areas

Employees need to continue to social distance, wear face coverings, and practice caution in common areas such as meeting rooms, restrooms, copier areas, kitchen and breakroom areas, and elevators or stairwells.

- Meetings - Minimize meetings as much as possible by continuing the use of email, electronic messaging (Teams chat), phone calls and virtual meetings (Zoom or Teams). Face to face meetings/collaboration sessions are ok if employees are following social distancing/face covering requirements are met. Wipe the area with disinfectant before and after use.

- Elevators – There should be no more than two people in an elevator at a time. When in the elevator, you should make an attempt to stand as far apart as feasible or use the stairs if possible. Use hand sanitizer before and after operating the elevator.
- Halls – Employees are encouraged to get outside for physical activity. Using halls for exercising is not permitted. When walking in hallways, ensure to social distance as much as possible and wear a face covering.
- Restrooms – ensure to wash your hands after using the restroom and use hand sanitizer after touching handles to enter office areas.
- Using a cloth or paper towel when opening and closing doors is encouraged.
- Breakrooms – ensure to wipe down surfaces prior to your use, and wash hands. Employees are encouraged to eat at their workstations, in their offices, or at the outside tables by the pond if social distancing is available.
- Shared equipment - Employees should wipe down shared items or equipment such as door handles, copiers, etc., before and after use and/or use hand sanitizer after use.

## Training

We have created training for employees on safety protocols and specific training for supervisors to help communicate the Return to Arboretum Plan and explain the processes and expectations.

## Managers and Supervisors

Managers and Supervisors are key partners in helping employees return safely to work at the Arboretum. Managers and Supervisors will receive training from HR. Key responsibilities include:

- Evaluating who should return in Wave 2 and providing the list and justifications to your department head.
- Evaluating and discussing any workspace concerns with your department head and FMS.
- Reviewing employee safety protocols with staff and helping to communicate any changes to the plan.
- Attending Manager/Supervisor training on returning to work at the Arboretum.
- Working with Human Resources on accommodations and flexible work arrangement requests.

## Visitors Expectations

- Visitors should continue to use Greetly, our virtual receptionist, or contact employees via phone to inform employees of their arrival. Greetly is working to provide a touchless visitor experience using their cell phone and we will update the system as soon as possible.
- Hand sanitizer will be placed next to the virtual assistant screen with instructions to use before and after using screen.
- Visitors will be required to wear a face covering and observe the SO safe work place practices.
- Visitors will be required to complete the Health Screening Form prior to being allowed into VCCS/SO Space

## Travel

The SO will continue to limit business travel, including travel to meetings and conferences. However, if you do travel for work or pleasure, please make sure to adhere to safety protocols outlined by the CDC and other agencies to help minimize the exposure to COVID-19, including social distancing, wearing face coverings, and practicing good hygiene.

- If you do have to travel for work, it is recommended to have one person per vehicle. If this is not possible, then employees are required to wear face coverings.
- Out of state travel for work purposes is still prohibited at this time.
- After we start our reopening waves to the Arboretum, employees who are scheduled to be in the building should self-isolate for 14 days if traveling out of the country or for trips to COVID-19 hotspots as denoted by the CDC before returning to work at the Arboretum.

## Appendix

## Employee Assistance Program Information

EAP Benefits are dependent on your state health plan election:

For employees enrolled in the **COVA Care and COVA HDHP Plan with Anthem**

Please contact Anthem EAP at 855-223-9277

[www.AnthemEAP.com](http://www.AnthemEAP.com)

Log In: Commonwealth of Virginia

For employees enrolled in the **COVA HealthAware Plan with Aetna**

Please contact Aetna EAP at 888-238-6232

[www.mylifevalues.com](http://www.mylifevalues.com)

Username: COVA

Password: COVA

For employees enrolled in **Optima Health HMO**

Please contact Optima at 1-800-899-8174 or 757-363-6777

You can also email:

[EAP@Optimahealth.com](mailto:EAP@Optimahealth.com)

For employees enrolled in the **Kaiser Permanente Plan**

Please contact (866) 517-7042

<https://www.achievesolutions.net/achievesolutions/en/kaiser/Home.do>

For hourly/wage employees or employees who are **not enrolled in a health benefits plan** Anthem EAP offers a wide variety of resources for you as well!

Please visit [www.AnthemEAP.com](http://www.AnthemEAP.com)

Use Log In: EAP Can Help

**Training Resources:**

Will be added in September.

**Additional Resources:**

Brandywine Response: [A Safe & Smooth Return to the Workplace with Brandywine Realty Trust](#)

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:** <https://www.cdc.gov/>

Commonwealth of Virginia Phase Three: Guidelines for all business sectors:

<https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/Forward-Virginia-Phase-Three-Guidelines.pdf>