

Alexandria Technical & Community College COVID-19 Commencement Preparedness Plan

Alexandria Technical & Community College, herein called “College”, is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for our students, faculty, staff, and members of our campus community. To ensure that, we have developed this Commencement Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Managers and employees are responsible for implementing this Plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 during our commencement ceremony and that requires full cooperation among students, faculty, staff and members of the Runestone Community Center’s Community. Only through a cooperative effort, can we establish and maintain the safety and health of our students and employees.

Minnesota Executive Order 21-11 requires that all businesses in Minnesota (whether Critical or Non-Critical) to have a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan (“Plan”) and implement that plan.

Campus administrators, supervisors, employees, and students are responsible for implementing and complying with all aspects of this Plan in collaboration with the administrators, supervisors and employees of the Runestone Community Center. **Alexandria Technical & Community College** administrators, supervisors and employees have our full support in enforcing the provisions of this policy. This Plan anticipates that students and employees participating in commencement ceremonies at the seated in-door venue of the Runestone Community Center (herein referred to as RCC) will follow this plan and the Back to the Rink COVID-19 Plan of the RCC. Campus leadership will continue to revise this Plan and communicate updates to the campus community as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves.

Alexandria Technical & Community College holds as paramount the health, safety and welfare of every member of its community. The College however, cannot guarantee a COVID-19-free environment. Unfortunately, the risk of COVID-19 exposure exists in all public places where people are present. Our College is taking all recommended steps to mitigate this risk, but we cannot categorically guarantee you will not get sick. Minimizing the risk of COVID-19 infections (or any other spread of disease) at Alexandria Technical & Community College’s commencement ceremony is a shared responsibility. As outlined below, every member of our community – including you – must do their part. Understand that if you attend the commencement ceremony of the College at the RCC, there is a risk you may contract COVID-19 and that illness, injury or death is a possible result.

Assumptions

The safety of College employees and the Minnesotans they serve is the highest priority.

- State and federal public health and other guidance and decrees will dictate the pace and scope of commencement ceremonies. Agencies must comply with applicable Governor's Executive Orders, Minnesota Department of Health, MMB, CDC, and OSHA guidance, and other appropriate directives.
- Employees and students may become ill with COVID-19 after they attend the commencement ceremony.
- The College has designated traffic patterns based on the RCC facility layout. Social distancing measures will be implemented in areas like hallways, auditoriums, and other common spaces.
- There may be expenses to modify the RCC to provide a safe commencement environment.

Limitations/Considerations

Analysis of risks to employees and students may impact commencement options and may limit strategies. At a minimum, the College must consider the following risk considerations prior to the commencement services:

- Social distancing protocols are expected to remain in effect for the short and intermediate term. Employees, students and visitors must abide by the appropriate social distancing guidance.
- Employees and students must abide by hygiene practices to prevent the transmission of COVID-19, and can use other personal protective measures, such as their own cloth face coverings, as appropriate.
- Processes that typically require employees to work within close contact with other individuals will be redesigned to include social distancing measures.

Alexandria Technical & Community College has established a Covid Management Team, which operates under the direction of the College Cabinet leadership. This team is comprised of Administrators, Deans and Supervisors.

ATCC COVID-19 Commencement Preparedness Plan

Prior to implementing commencement ceremonies under Executive Order 21-11, the College must have an established and implemented COVID-19 commencement preparedness plan.

Per Executive Order 21-11 and Stay Safe MN “Covid-19 Preparedness Plan Guidance: Requirements for Indoor Venues,” each plan must have the following sections:

- Health screening and “stay at home”
- Managing Occupancy
- Access, arrival, and checkpoints
- Seating and assignment for indoor venues
- Hand hygiene practices
- Use of face covering
- Cleaning and disinfecting
- Food service, concessions and all merchandizing
- Live entertainment
- Incident management

The College has reviewed the commencement ceremony options and has determined the services that can be conducted in an indoor-seated venue using risk control strategies, including social distancing.

Considerations include but are not limited to the following:

- Commencement ceremonies that best serve the campus community by being conducted in-person, using risk control methods and that can accommodate social distancing strategies.
- Splitting commencement ceremonies between the maximum number of graduates that can attend the ceremony and remain under the calculated Covid rated capacity for the RCC.
- Providing options to view the commencement ceremonies virtually for families and friends that are not permitted to attend commencement.

Requirements and Recommendations

1. Health screening and “stay at home”

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) recently reissued its guidance, "Pandemic Preparedness in the Workplace and the Americans with Disabilities Act," to specifically address the COVID-19 pandemic. In its reissued guidance, the EEOC confirmed the COVID-19 pandemic permits employers to ask COVID-19-related health questions and, in some situations, measure employees' body temperatures before allowing them to enter the worksite, so long as such screenings are implemented on a nondiscriminatory basis, and all

information gathered is treated as confidential medical information under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Additionally, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued guidance recommending workplaces located in communities with minimal to moderate COVID-19 risk implement regular health checks, including temperature screening.

Employees and students will be advised to stay home if they are sick or are exhibiting any symptoms of Covid.

Employees and students will not be permitted to enter the RCC Building for commencement if they do not complete and pass the daily health check in screening tool. Individuals who refuse to complete the screening and persist in entering the RCC building may be removed from the building.

All visitors and contractors will not be permitted to enter the RCC building if they do not complete and pass the daily health check in screening tool. Visitors and contractors who refuse to complete the screening will not be permitted to enter the building.

Minnesota's Department of Management and Budget requires all State agencies, including the College, to provide the following Tennessee notice, in writing or orally, prior to conducting any health or temperature screenings of any individuals. Signatures are not necessary, and the notice requirement can be satisfied by displaying it in the screening area, so long as it is displayed prominently and proximate to the actual screening location to ensure individuals see it, every time they are to be screened.

Tennessee Notice

Prior to entering offices, classrooms, shops and related venues, all student and employees will be asked a series of questions and some may be required to submit to temperature screening. This data is classified as private under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. We will use this data to screen individuals seeking admission to the office for potential health risks to try to avoid the potential of spreading contagious diseases. The data helps us to determine whether risk factors are present and whether you will be denied admission for the protection of agency staff and/or the public. This is not a COVID-19 test and is not a determination of whether or not an individual is infected with or has been exposed to COVID-19. This data will be gathered and reviewed by agency staff, including non-medical personnel, in deciding whether to permit you admission to the College. You are not legally required to provide this data and providing the data is voluntary. However, if you refuse to provide the data, you will not be admitted to the RCC building. The data collected from you may be shared with agency staff collecting the data, agency HR staff, the

agency safety administrator, agency management, and other persons or entities authorized by law.

Employees and students have been informed of and encouraged to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The following policies and procedures are being implemented to assess workers' health status prior to entering the campus and for employees and students to report when they are sick or experiencing symptoms.

College students, employees, visitors and contractors will be required to complete a COVID health-screening questionnaire online utilizing the following COVID health screening questions from the Minnesota Department of Health.

Have you been in close and prolonged physical contact (within less than six feet for at least fifteen minutes) with an individual who has tested positive for or been diagnosed with COVID-19, or exposed to their cough or sneeze, within the last 14 calendar days; or have you tested positive for or been diagnosed with COVID-19 within the last 14 calendar days?

Yes No

If yes, you will not be admitted to the RCC building and must leave the building.

Have you had any of the following symptoms within the last 72 hours that you cannot attribute to another health condition?

Please answer "Yes" or "No" to each question. Do you have:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | Fever (100.4°F or higher), or feeling feverish? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | Chills? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | A new or worsening cough? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | New or worsening shortness of breath? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | New or worsening sore throat? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | New muscle aches? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | New severe headache? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | New loss of smell or taste? |

If an employee, student, faculty member, visitor or contractor answers "Yes" to any of the above questions, they will be required to immediately leave the RCC building and return to their residence.

2. Managing occupancy

Alexandria Technical & Community College will manage occupancy levels using the capacity requirements determined by the Runestone Community Center for indoor venues as calculated by

Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues (<https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp>).

In order to remain under the Runestone Community Center's occupant capacity, Alexandria Technical & Community College will:

- Host three separate commencement ceremonies on Wednesday, May 12th, which have been divided based on program size:
 - 9:00 AM – Manufacturing, Transportation and Design Division Programs
 - 11:00 AM – Health (Except Nursing), Business and Liberal Arts Programs
 - 1:00 PM – Law Enforcement and Nursing Programs

To ensure everyone's safety and to meet guidelines set by the Minnesota Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control, no spectators or guests will be allowed to attend commencement ceremonies.

The ceremony will be livestreamed on Facebook, YouTube and on Alexandria Technical & Community College's website.

3. Access, arrival, and checkpoints

Students have been asked to arrive no more than thirty minutes before the ceremony. Gowns, caps, stoles, cords and tassels will be distributed by Student Life on campus on the dates prior to the commencement ceremony. Students should be wearing their gowns, caps, stoles, military cords and Honors tassels. Students will keep their gowns, caps, stoles, military cords and Honors tassels on after the ceremony and will not need to return them.

Employees, students and contractors arriving to the Runestone Center will be checked at the entrance checkpoint to verify that they have completed the daily health check in screening. If they have not completed the screening, a paper copy of the screening questions will be provided for them to complete before entering the RCC building.

If employees, students and contractors are unwilling to complete the daily health check in screening, they will not be allowed access to the RCC building.

4. Seating and assignment for indoor venues

Venue seating in the arena will be spaced at six foot increments. Commencement seating will be spaced no closer than twelve feet from the stage and the commencement speakers.

After their health check screening has been verified, students will go directly to their assigned seats in the arena. A commencement program will be placed on their seat prior to their arrival in the arena.

Students will remain in their assigned seat until their program has been called to the stage to receive their diploma.

When the student's name is read, they will walk across the stage and receive their diploma. The student may remove their face covering only when they receive their diploma for their photograph, but must replace the face covering immediately after receiving their diploma.

Students may not shake hands on stage with the diploma distributor or any other individuals. A social distance of at least six feet will be maintained to the extent possible, to ensure that person-to-person contact between people is as brief as possible. Non-physical acknowledgements and/or greetings are encouraged as a substitute for physical contact.

After the student has crossed the stage and received their diploma, they will replace their face covering, exit the stage and proceed to the photography kiosk to have their photo taken. After their graduation photograph has been taken, they will then exit the RCC building. They will not be allowed to return back to their seat in the arena. This will minimize congestion and crowding within the building.

5. Hand hygiene practices

Basic infection prevention measures have been implemented at the RCC. Employees and students are instructed to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially at the beginning and end of their time at the RCC, prior to any mealtimes and after using the toilet. Restrooms will be open to provide additional opportunities for commencement participants to wash their hands. The College will have hand-sanitizer dispensers placed strategically throughout the RCC building. (Sanitizers must have an alcohol content of greater than 60% ethanol or greater than 70% isopropanol.)

6. Use of face covering

Employees, students, visitors and contractors must wear a face covering to prevent the spread of COVID-19 while participating in the commencement ceremonies in the RCC building in strict compliance with Minnesota [Governor Walz's Executive Order 20-81](#) and with Minnesota Department of Health's Face Covering Requirements and Recommendations,

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html> Face coverings must be worn

upon entering the RCC building, in hallways, occupied restrooms, occupied arena, in common areas and in areas where social distancing cannot be maintained.

In accordance with Governor Walz's Executive Order 20-81, beginning on Friday, July 24, 2020 at 11:59 p.m., Minnesotans must wear a face covering in indoor businesses and indoor public settings, as described in this order and the related industry guidance, available at the Stay Safe Minnesota website (<https://staysafe.mn.gov>), as well as any other guidance referenced in this order. Workers must also wear face coverings outdoors when it is not possible to maintain social distancing.

Nothing in Governor Walz's Executive Order 20-81 or previous Executive Orders should be construed as to prohibit or prevent political subdivisions from implementing, within their jurisdictions and pursuant to applicable law and authority, requirements beyond those contained in this Executive Order, as long as the additional requirements have a real or substantial relation to the public health crisis caused by COVID-19. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 2019, section 12.32, political subdivisions may not relax or reduce this Executive Order's requirements. In other words, to the extent that they have authority to do so, cities and other political subdivisions may take actions that are more protective of the public health, consistent with applicable law, but may not take actions that are less protective of the public health.

Consistent with Executive Order 20-81, colleges, universities, and the system office will require all employees, students and visitors to wear face masks or face coverings in all areas of the RCC building as well as other designated confined spaces, except in locations or circumstances exempted under EO 20-81. Additionally, face masks or face coverings are required in outdoor areas where social distancing is not possible to maintain. The required face masks/face coverings must cover both the mouth and nasal passages. Masks that incorporate a valve designed to facilitate easy exhaling, mesh masks, or masks with openings, holes, visible gaps in the design or material, or vents are not sufficient face coverings because they allow exhaled droplets to be released into the air.

Face coverings are required to be worn in the RCC building to help control infection from people who may be infected but are asymptomatic. They may provide some limited protection from being infected, if exposed.

Exceptions to the Required Use of Face Masks or Face Coverings; Consequences for Failure or Refusal to Comply

Employees who are unable to wear a face mask or face covering in a required area due to the employee's disability, as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act, should contact the human resources office or such other office that is designated by the college or university to request an accommodation. Employees who refuse to wear a face mask or face covering in a required area, and who are not excused

from the requirement, are subject to disciplinary action consistent with the procedures established in the applicable collective bargaining agreement or compensation plan.

Students who are unable to wear a face mask or face covering in a required area due to the student's disability, as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act, should contact an office designated by the college or university to request an accommodation. Students who are unwilling to wear a face mask or face covering in a required area and who are not excused from the requirement may be subject to being removed from the RCC building.

Authorization to Temporarily Remove Face Coverings

Employees and students may temporarily remove face coverings in the following situations:

- While speaking or announcing degrees at the designated podium on stage;
- When receiving their diploma on stage for their photograph;
 - Mask may be removed when receiving their diploma, but must be immediately replaced after they have received their diploma and before exiting the stage.
- When being photographed in the photography kiosk by GradImages;
 - The mask can only be removed after the student has been placed within the kiosk by the photographer and must be replaced immediately after the photograph has been taken and before leaving the kiosk.
 - The photographer must follow the guidance found on the Stay Safe web page, under Covid-19 Preparedness Plan Guidance: Requirements for all Businesses and Other Entities.
[\(http://dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/COVID_19_preparedness_plan_requirements_guidelines_businesses.pdf\)](http://dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/COVID_19_preparedness_plan_requirements_guidelines_businesses.pdf)

Contractors must adhere to this face covering policy even when they are working in an area in the RCC building that they have sole control over and entrance to that controlled area is restricted from access by employees, students and visitors. Contractors must comply by the above face covering requirement when they are in areas in the RCC building that is not in their sole control or have restricted access.

Important Points about the Use of Face Coverings

- Face coverings can help with preventing **your** germs from infecting others – especially in situations where you may spread the virus without symptoms.
- Wearing a face covering **does not** protect you from others who may spread the virus. So, whether or not you wear a face covering, you still need to wash your hands frequently, cover your cough, and practice social distancing by keeping at least 6 feet of space between people.
- Face shields cannot be worn in place of face coverings.
- The references to face coverings in this Plan cannot be transferred over to the use of face shields.

- People who are sick should still stay home. Wearing a face covering does not mean people who are sick should go out into the community. If you are sick and need to go to the doctor, call your health care provider before going in and wear a face covering to the clinic.
- A face covering should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.
- The sanitary care and cleaning of fabric face coverings is the responsibility of the student and employee.
- The RCC has posted one or more signs that are visible to all persons—including workers, customers, and visitors— instructing them to wear face coverings as required by this Executive Order.

Compliance

Colleges, universities and the system office are required to ensure compliance with the face mask – face covering requirements established in this operating instruction by adopting the following procedures:

- ATCC directs faculty to ensure compliance with the face mask requirement by all students attending the commencement ceremonies. No faculty member is permitted to alter any of the requirements of Governor Walz's Executive Order 20-81 without written authorization by their program Dean. Students who fail to comply with the face covering requirements will be directed to immediately leave the RCC building.

Employee and student welfare are an important component for commencement safety for Alexandria Technical & Community College.

Alexandria Technical & Community College has followed the guidelines available at MDH's Institutes of Higher Education website (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/ihe.html>)

This also includes following parameters set forth in *Recommendations for Different Levels of COVID-19 Transmission Among Higher Education Institutions* on this website.

7. Cleaning and disinfecting

Alexandria Technical & Community College's commencement ceremonies will fall under the cleaning and disinfecting guidelines and practices of the venue, Runestone Community Center's, "Back to the Rink Cvoid-19 Plan." Shared surfaces should be wiped down with an appropriate disinfectant.

ATCC's three commencement ceremonies are staggered to permit cleaning of common areas and restrooms by the RCC and to allow for complete air exchange within the RCC building.

8. Food service, concessions and all merchandizing

Alexandria Technical & Community College will not provide food service, concessions or merchandizing opportunities during any of their commencement ceremonies.

9. Live entertainment

Commencement speakers and degree announcers will be allowed to remove their mask while speaking or announcing degrees. Each speaker and announcer will be required to place a Covid-compliant microphone cover on the microphone that they will be utilizing before they speak/announce. Each speaker and announcer must remove their own microphone cover after they have utilized the microphone to prepare it for the next speaker or announcer.

Covid-compliant microphone covers will be placed at the podium for placement on the microphone by the speaker or announcer. A waste can will be located adjacent to the podium to permit them to dispose of the microphone cover before leaving the stage.

All speakers and announcers must remain twelve feet from all others, audience and other announcers and speakers while speaking or announcing degrees. This is in compliance with Minnesota Department of Health's Face Covering and Recommendations.

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html>)

10. Incident management

Alexandria Technical & Community College will follow the incident management policies and procedures of the Runestone Community Center. The College may implement their Emergency Crisis Response Plan, if warranted by the severity of an incident.

The Alexandria Police Department will be on-site during the commencement ceremonies to provide incident management support.

Communications

This COVID-19 Commencement Preparedness Plan has been certified by **Alexandria Technical & Community College's Cabinet** and will be posted through the College website using media relations standard operating procedures for notifying the campus community. This Plan, protocol, recommendations, training and communications will be updated as necessary.

Certified by:



Alexandria Technical & Community College President

Revised: 5/5/21

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