

Guidelines on the Use of Plastic Barriers to Reduce Potential Transmission of COVID-19

AUGUST 10, 2021

Introduction

COVID-19 is primarily spread person to person via respiratory droplets that become airborne when a person coughs, sneezes, or talks. Contact transmission via surface contamination has been determined to be extremely rare. Face covers, frequent handwashing, and social distancing behaviors are the best-known measures for mitigating the spread of the virus. Non-porous plastic barriers and dividers can also play an important role by minimizing direct transmission of contaminants through the breathing zone.

UVA Facilities Management has the capacity to manufacture low cost, clear and opaque barriers, shields and dividers. These will be ordered through an online catalog specifying size, shape, and application. The Office of Emergency Management in conjunction with Facilities Management is providing these guidelines to encourage best practices and consistency across Grounds regarding the use of these barriers. Contact Facilities Management if your application falls outside of these typical applications or standard sizes and we will work with you to develop a custom solution.

Applications

GENERAL:

Barriers may provide an additional layer of protection, but they are not a substitute for 6 ft. social distancing. Where dividers are used in shared spaces, face masks and proper sanitation are still essential for minimizing transmission. Consider signage to reinforce these behaviors and request users to disinfect the work surface and barriers before and after use.

Barriers and dividers may be mounted to a wall or desk using two-sided tape or other means. They can also be self-supporting. Barriers should not be hung from the ceiling as they could impact the performance of fire sprinklers. In all cases, the top of a divider must be more than 18 inches below the height of any sprinkler heads. The maximum height of any barrier should be 6 ½ ft.

Temporary physical barriers that limit traffic may be acceptable in limited applications, but this is generally discouraged as it may impact code required emergency

egress paths and/or ADA compliance. Signage or directional tape on the floor is preferred. High visibility tape or floor signs may also be used in high traffic areas to indicate 6 ft spacing. Any side wall barrier that extends more than 4" into the path of travel must extend to the floor or to within 27" of the floor per ADA requirements.

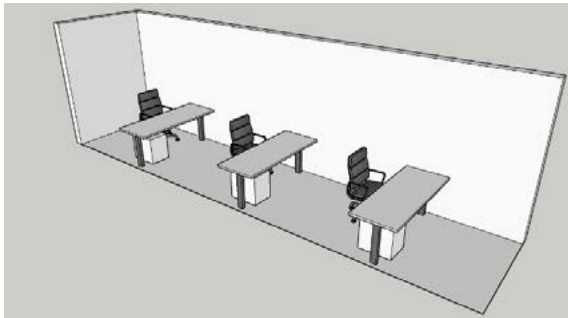
MATERIALS:

Clear Lexan barriers are recommended in applications where visibility is crucial. However, translucent and opaque barriers should be used wherever possible due to material shortages and cost savings. Translucent and solid colors also minimize the potential for someone to unintentionally walk into the barrier. This potential should not be underestimated.

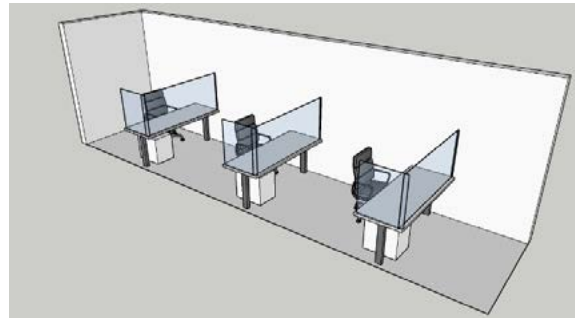
OPEN OFFICE SPACES:

Utilize barriers where occupants are in close proximity to one another or in high traffic areas. Low height partitions can be extended vertically up to 6 1/2 feet. Where no partitions exist, full height barriers provide separation from people passing by or between adjacent cubicles. Smaller self-supporting desk partitions may also be used in various configurations.

BEFORE



AFTER



BEFORE

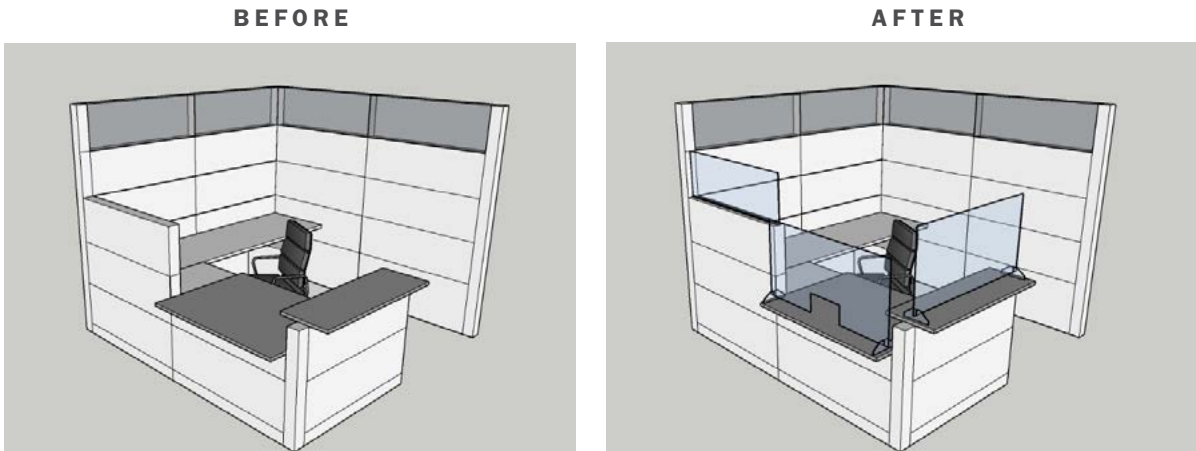


AFTER



TRANSACTION/SERVICE COUNTERS:

Dividers with pass thru openings are appropriate for staff that require closer contact or more frequent transactions. Counters that are currently ADA accessible must maintain that accessibility. Typically, that means a 36" minimum of clear space along the length of the counter.



RESTROOMS:

Every restroom layout is unique and ADA accommodations must be maintained. Urinals are typically separated by dividers that extend out from the wall no more than 24". Taller and deeper partitions may be desired for additional barrier protection, but all ADA accessible urinals must maintain a 30" wide clear path in front if partitions extend out less than 24" from the wall and a 36" clear path if the partitions are 24" or deeper. Contact Facilities management if there are questions.

Similarly, dividers may be installed between sinks, but they should not extend out beyond the counter. If dividers are installed, soap and towel dispenser locations should also be considered.

In lieu of using dividers in restrooms, signage may be preferred to limit the number of toilets, urinals, and sinks in use.

