

Returning to campus to pick up personal items and move out of dorms.

Over the next few weeks, universities across the nation will be setting up times for students to return to campus to pick up personal items, clear dorm rooms, and resolve other matters. For most, the window to do so will be strictly regulated for both time, and access.

Because weeks have passed since the majority of students were on campus, the probability of items left in the dorm being infected with the COVID-19 virus is slim however, this does not mean that personal safety protocols should not be followed when picking up personal items.

The following tips are designed to increase your personal safety awareness and to safeguard you and your property.

1: Your university will either designate or allow you to schedule as specific time pick up your belongings and clear your dorm. These times are designed to minimize the number of people in a specific area at a given time. The university will also issue specific guidelines regarding parking, which buildings and entrances are to be used, and how long you can be on campus. Likely, the time will be limited to no more than a couple of hours. Your university may also limit the number of people you may have helping you. So far, the average number of people allowed on campus to help with moves is two.

2: Before you head for campus, think about what you are picking up and what you are putting those items in. While the current assumed lifespan of the virus is measured in hours and days, depending on the surface, you will still want to treat everything in your dorm room as a potential threat until it is properly disinfected. This means the use of disposable boxes or plastic containers that can be disinfected after use to transport hardgoods such as books, printers, and other personal items. Soft goods such as clothes and linens should be placed in large plastic lawn or leaf bags. Twist and tie these prior to placing them in your vehicle. Do not use duffels, backpacks, or other luggage. These are hard to clean and harder to decontaminate. All clothes and bedding should be washed as soon as possible after arriving home. Wipe down other items with disinfecting wipes prior to storing.

3: Be sure you have enough space in the vehicle. In many cases, universities are limiting not only the number of people but also the number of vehicles being allowed on campus. If you are going to be flying home, and are planning on shipping the majority of your belongings home via the post office, FedEx or UPS be sure to check with the carrier beforehand to make sure they are open and to understand in advance what you can ship and the best way to package it.

4: Practice personal safety. Since you will be moving items that may have accumulated dust, and are exposing yourself to potentially contaminated common areas, we recommend the use of personal protective equipment while moving or cleaning your dorm room. Nitrile or latex gloves are essential. If these are not available, there are a variety of rubber or latex coated work gloves available that, while not optimal, will provide an increased level of protection while moving. N-95 or similar protective mask are not required although you may want to use one if your room is extremely dusty if you are prone to unconsciously touch your face. Above all, frequently wash your hands throughout the process.

5: Take safety seriously. Go in, pack, load and get out. The less time you spend on campus, the lower the risk to you or those helping you. Don't lose personal safety awareness. Just because there are few people on campus doesn't mean someone is not looking for an opportunity to take advantage of the situation. Lock your car and dorm when transporting loads between the two points. Be aware of strangers, no one should be hanging around campus at this point. If you are concerned, notify campus security.

6: Finally, pay attention to the rules set forth by your university and your community. This is not the time to visit old friends, meet up for coffee, or plan you next get together. Practice social distancing, know who you come in contact with, and minimize exposure.

Practicing personal safety now, will help ensure your campus is open and that you can return in the fall. For more information on this, or any of our Arriving Prepared materials, contact us at training@arrivingprepared.com or visit our website at www.arrivingprepared.com