

Barriers and Partitions



EH&S and Facilities Services may recommend a barrier or partition between individuals where less than six feet of physical distance cannot be maintained while performing critical functions or where a high frequency of passing within six feet may occur. Facilities Services can custom fabricate a variety of protective shields and barriers or they may be acquired via private vendors.

Because OSU requires face coverings on campus, installation of a partition or barrier is not necessary if people remain six feet apart except for certain circumstances. (See the OSU [Face Covering](#) and [Physical Distancing](#) Policies as well as current OHA guidance.) Also, barriers may not be installed in work or break areas solely for the purpose of spacing people within six feet of each other, as the Physical Distancing Policy and room capacities set by OSU Space Management apply to all spaces.

While a physical barrier such as a plexiglass guard can limit the transmission of COVID-19 via droplets and aerosols in a well-ventilated space, a physical barrier not a substitute for face covering use.

LIMITATIONS OF PLEXIGLASS BARRIERS AND PARTITIONS

- Barriers are known to help reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission via droplets and aerosols when used with other public health measures.
- Barriers do not replace the need to maintain six feet of separation between individuals when possible.
- Barriers do not replace the need to follow other public health requirements such as practicing good hygiene (e.g., washing hands, not touching your face, staying home if you are ill), the requirement to wear face coverings on campus and, if applicable, other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), or other requirements and recommendations from the CDC and Oregon Health Authority.
- There may be constraints in the physical/structural environment that prevent or limit the installation of barriers.
- Barriers and partitions may not be feasible or appropriate in all workspaces or for all work activities.
- Prior to barrier design and installation, consult with Facilities Services and EH&S regarding ventilation system airflow, and fire and life safety protection systems (e.g., fire alarm notification devices, fire sprinklers, fire pull stations).
- Barriers may break if individuals lean against the material, which may expose sharp edges. Consider using polycarbonate materials if the barrier may be subjected to individuals leaning or pushing against it.

GUIDELINES FOR INSTALLATION

- The first step is to consult with Facilities Services and EH&S on barrier or partition design and installation.
- Whenever possible, a surface-mounted or free-standing barrier should be used.
- Large barriers should be carefully evaluated and installed to prevent inadvertent knocking over due to weight or imbalance.
- If necessary, use temporary adhesive when securing to a desk, but do so with careful consideration for the long-term impact to finishes.
- Mounting to the floor, wall, from ceiling, ceiling grid, building structure, mechanical system, or pipes requires consultation and assistance from Facilities Services.
- The average sitting height for individuals varies based on chair height and type; therefore, plexiglass vertical heights will need to be designed specific to the location, unless the vertical height dimensions can be applied across similar workstations. In general, for sitting workstations, the partition or barrier should rise five feet from the floor when individuals are seated and at least six feet from the floor for standing individuals. To block respiratory droplets from standing individuals, the top horizontal edge height of the barrier should be at least 72 inches, or six feet, above the floor and account for the tallest average individual height with the addition of a buffer.

BUILDING AND FIRE SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- Ensure that the barrier or partition is at least 18 inches below ceiling to prevent interference with fire sprinkler spray patterns.
- If full height barriers are needed, EH&S will need to assess and determine if new fire safety devices will be required and if the material being used meets code-required flame-spread ratings. Installation of new fire sprinkler or fire alarm devices may be necessary before barrier installation.
- Barriers must not interfere with existing ventilation, smoke detection, lighting, corridors, aisles or other similar open pathways intended for exiting. Barriers that interfere with existing exit routes must be reviewed by EH&S before installation.

CLEANING AND MAINTAINING PLEXIGLASS BARRIERS

- Barriers must be considered contaminated surfaces anytime occupants have been present and as such must be treated as a high-touch surface and cleaned frequently.
- Clean the plexiglass barrier by using mild soap and water to remove any bulk dirt and debris buildup. Lightly scrub the plexiglass surface with a non-abrasive sponge or clean cloth such as microfiber. Most disinfecting wipes can also be used. Use a dry non-abrasive or microfiber cloth to dry the plexiglass surface. Do not use alcohols or solvents to clean plexiglass or polycarbonate-type plastics.

* Facilities Services can custom fabricate a variety of protective shields and barriers at the expense of the unit or they can be acquired via private vendors. Facilities Services' ability to fabricate barriers is based on the availability of supplies and personnel bandwidth. The barrier fabrication priority is for high volume counters with broad customer bases.