

# COVID-19 Protocols for in-person WMTC Courses

## Exposure Risk, Education, & Mastery

Transmission of the coronavirus responsible for COVID-19 occurs in three ways:

1. Via respiratory droplets through coughing, sneezing, or loud talking or singing.
2. Via aerosol clouds.
3. Via fomites (droplets that settle on a surface and then transferred by touch to your nose, mouth, or eyes).

The risk of disease transmission increases in enclosed, poorly ventilated spaces and with the amount of face-to-face skill lab and simulation time. In contrast, a decrease in simulation time corresponds with a reduction in student mastery. We designed our mitigation strategies to promote a high level of student mastery while minimizing COVID-19 transmission risk. These mitigation strategies assume a degree of risk tolerance that requires acceptance and agreement by WMTC, instructors, sponsors, and students; some require interpretation of state and local health recommendations. Honest and open communication regarding signs, symptoms, medical history, and potential COVID-19 contacts is paramount to running a successful course; anything less jeopardizes staff and participants' health and safety and may end the class prematurely. We understand that students may make management and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) errors during the course as they are learning; therefore, redundancy and prevention are critical parts of our overall course strategy. We strongly recommend that you get a COVID vaccine when it becomes available.

Persons 65 and older, those with underlying health conditions, those with compromised immune systems, and those who smoke or vape are at higher risk for severe illness should they acquire COVID-19. If you fall into this category, we recommend discussing your risk factors with your health care provider before registering for an in-person course.

## Precourse Requirements

- All students must participate in a fourteen-day self-monitoring period immediately before the course start; they must also complete WMTC's daily pre-course health report. They must turn-in the health report to their instructor at the course start; it forms a baseline for monitoring during the course.
- Students must also schedule and complete the WMTC phone health questionnaire with the sponsor immediately before their departure to the course site. Based on the results of their phone questionnaire, a student may be denied admittance to the course. Should a student be denied admission to the course after registering and paying for the course due to a failed pre-course phone questionnaire, they may be eligible for a partial refund.
- In some cases, a sponsor may require additional requirements that may include but are not limited to: a pre-course quarantine, PCR or antigen testing, a COVID or influenza vaccine, etc. Admission criteria for a specific course are clearly described during the registration process.

## PPE Requirements during a Course

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements minimize the possibility of transmitting an infection during an in-person course.
- Students must supply\* and wear an approved face covering: Well-fitted, three-layer cloth masks with a replaceable middle filter layer and surgical masks offer reasonable protection. Double masking (surgical mask + buff or surgical mask + cloth mask) offers greater protection. N-95, KN-95, and NF-95 respirators offer the best protection as they trap viral particles emitted by a participant or staff person and minimize the inhalation of the viral particles shed by others. NOTE: Beards interfere with mask and respiratory fit and are discouraged.
- Students must supply\* wear both an approved face covering (as described above) and eye protection during skill labs and simulation. Students must wear goggles or wraparound glasses (no face shields) and a mask when acting as a patient during simulations or BLS skills training. A face shield may replace goggles or wraparound glasses during skill labs and when acting as a rescuer during simulations.
- Students must wear gloves—provided by the instructor—during all skill labs and simulations and properly dispose of and wash/sanitize hands immediately afterward.
- We recommend students and instructors shower and change clothes daily to increase hygiene and reduce droplet and fomite exposure.

*\* On occasion, a sponsor may supply face coverings, face shields, goggles, or glasses with side protection.*

## Site Requirements

- The course site must be near a clinic with confirmed, reliable, and accurate RT PCR and antigen COVID-19 testing.
- There is a place for sick students to isolate and quarantine at the site or locally should it become necessary (required by local health authorities).
- Ample parking is available for students, instructors, and staff vehicles.

## Classroom Requirements

- An outdoor classroom is preferred. An indoor classroom with a minimum 20-foot ceiling and excellent ventilation, or active UVC decontamination, may be used if an outdoor classroom is unavailable. Where necessary, floor and desk tape help define and maintain proper distancing.
- Students are responsible for disinfecting community surfaces and the dining area before and after use. Sponsors will provide disinfecting wipes or solutions.
- The classroom will have multiple and easily accessible handwashing and disinfection stations.

## Class Management during a Course

- Each morning and evening during the course, instructors will record the results of WMTC's COVID-19 signs and symptoms questionnaire. Students who present with signs and symptoms of COVID-19 will be immediately removed from the course and directed (or assisted) to a local antigen testing site.
- As much as possible, we teach courses and practical sessions outside to minimize aerosol transmission. If an outdoor classroom does not have AV capabilities, the instructor will substitute additional simulations in place of video simulations.
- Instructors will assign students seats for the duration of the course that maintains physical distance while seated. All student seating will face in the same direction. Round-table seating is not permitted. Where necessary, floor and desk tape help define and maintain proper distancing.
- Students will maintain a minimum of six-foot—ten feet preferred—physical distancing as much as possible during the course; if physical distancing is not possible, masks and eye protection are mandatory.
- Personal belongings are stored separately from course equipment.
- Students may work with the same partners during skill labs and simulations to minimize exposure, especially those students who have risk factors for COVID-19.
- There is a heavy focus on handwashing and hygiene during breaks, skill labs, and simulations. Rescuers must sanitize gloves before and after they touch a patient's face.
- Instructors will use individual sponges to apply bruising moulage; wash sponges between uses.

The pandemic situation continues to be fluid with unexpected outbreaks and viral mutations, and there is a chance that a course may cancel. The decision to cancel a course, should it occur, will be made by the CDC, WHO, federal, state, and county officials independently or in coordination with the course sponsor or by WMTC. We recommend students traveling to a course site by plane be vaccinated and carry flight insurance.

Should your course cancel before the scheduled course start:

1. The course sponsor will notify you by email and may follow-up by phone.
2. We will do our best to reschedule the course, along with the original instructor(s).
3. Refunds or credit towards a future course are the responsibility of the course sponsor.

There is also the possibility that despite our mitigation practices, your course may end early should you or a classmate become infected with COVID-19. Should this occur, we will do our best to schedule a make-up session. Partial refunds may be available.

Please contact the WMTC office if you have any questions.

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