

Workplace Barriers (Plexiglass) FAQs

Revised: August 18, 2021

Can barriers be used to replace face coverings or physical distancing?

No, plexiglass barriers do not replace wearing face coverings or physical distancing requirements. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Cal/OSHA and the County/State do NOT recommend barriers as a replacement for physical distancing or personal protective equipment use (face coverings/face shields). Barriers should only be used in combination with other COVID control measures, such as physical distancing, face coverings and routine disinfection of high-contact surfaces.

What protection do barriers offer when all other current mitigation measures are considered?

Barriers may add droplet protection in locations with frequent, short duration contact with personnel from outside your office or laboratory. When paired with physical distancing and proper face covering, reception areas may benefit from properly placed barriers. They can also be a good reminder of distancing requirements.

How do departments request for the barriers/plexiglass?

Complete and submit the [Physical Assessment Self-Evaluation Checklist](#) with the accompanying [Self-Evaluation Reference Guide](#). You will also find the link to the plexi-glass form where you could provide photos and dimensions of areas where you are inquiring to place plexiglass barriers. EHS will review the information provided to determine the appropriate next step.

In some cases, depending on the complexity of the request, EHS staff may conduct a physical site assessment. If needed, EHS staff can provide a physical assessment of your office space and recommend plexiglass for customer-facing interactions, such as customers interacting with cashiers, or areas with customer-facing counters/windows or reception desks or areas. EHS staff will look for spaces that have a high volume of traffic and areas where staff have frequent contact with members of the public.

What sizes are available for the customer-facing barriers/plexiglass?

EHS has 2 sizes of plexiglass barriers in our inventory:

- Small – frameless, 31.5"W x 35.5"H with bottom opening of 7.88"H x 11.81"W, base depth of 10"
- Large – framed, 60"W x 32"H with bottom opening of 5"H x 60"W, base depth of 7"

Besides customer-facing areas, are there any recommendations on other types of barriers?

Departments may pursue procurement of their own plexiglass barriers, if the current EHS plexiglass barriers options do not meet department needs.

In addition to the standard size plexiglass units offered by EHS, please refer to the table below for additional barrier recommendations.

Spaces/Scenarios	Plexiglass Barrier Resource
Customer counter/window	https://hdsupplysolutions.com/p/acrylic-personal-protection-barrier-31-1-2-in-h-x-35-1-2-in-w-p107276
Reception desk	https://hdsupplysolutions.com/p/acrylic-personal-protection-barrier-31-1-2-in-h-x-35-1-2-in-w-p107276
Conference room	4-person Table top: https://www.sitonit.net/productcatalog/sector-freestanding-mobile-screens.html ; Contact Blue Space, Ken Gordon ken@bluespaceinteriors.com
Shared offices	https://www.sitonit.net/productcatalog/sector-freestanding-mobile-screens.html ; Contact Blue Space, Ken Gordon ken@bluespaceinteriors.com
Clustered desks/cubicle	https://www.amazon.com/Sneeze-Guard-Plastic-Protection-Checkout/dp/B08PW4DJ5Z/ref=pd_di_scai_24/140-2212133-1124204?pd_rd_w=bK99F&pf_rd_p=c9443270-b914-4430-a90b-72e3e7e784e0&pf_rd_r=44JTA8T2CPQY484TEW66&pd_rd_r=a421c110-4d18-4fb0-af57-0f51e874ce73&pd_rd_wg=VerUs&pd_rd_i=B08PW4DJ5Z&psc=1
Classrooms	Tri-fold Table top: https://www.sitonit.net/productcatalog/sector-tabletop-screens.html ; Contact Blue Space, Ken Gordon ken@bluespaceinteriors.com
One-on-one studies	2-person Table top: https://www.sitonit.net/productcatalog/sector-freestanding-mobile-screens.html ; Contact Blue Space, Ken Gordon ken@bluespaceinteriors.com
Cashier	https://hdsupplysolutions.com/p/acrylic-personal-protection-barrier-31-1-2-in-h-x-35-1-2-in-w-p107276

Is assembly required with the EHS provided barriers?

Yes, assembly is easy and is required for both types of plexiglass units. The framed units require a Philips-head screwdriver to install the base while the frameless units do not require any tools for assembly.

What type of cleaning solution do I use to clean the plexiglass barrier?

Do not use alcohol-based cleaning solutions or glass cleaners. To maintain the clarity of the acrylic or plexiglass, only use water and soap to clean.

What safety considerations need to be in place if our department procures our own plexiglass barriers?

- Ensure barriers fall 18 inches below the ceiling to prevent interference with fire sprinklers spray patterns.
- Barriers must not interfere with existing corridors, aisles or other similar open pathways intended for egress. Barriers that interfere with existing exit routes must be reviewed by EHS.
- Examine the ventilation design with regard to the location of supply and return air registers so that the barriers do not block airflow within spaces.
- Barriers should be adequately secured to prevent them from falling.

Are barriers necessary in classrooms or lecture halls?

Barriers are one of many layers of control measures. EHS recommends a wholistic approach to controlling COVID exposure that involves several elements, including the use of plexiglass barriers, when applicable. The following controls are viable approaches that should be considered in your COVID mitigation approach:

- Follow all applicable face covering policies that apply to your operation (i.e., indoor usage, etc.)
- Wash or disinfect hands and sanitize surfaces
- Communicate to students that they should stay home when sick
- Follow all applicable UCI policies, please refer to the following site for current COVID requirements: <https://www.ehs.uci.edu/public-health/covid-19/index.php>

Can instructors remove their face covering when teaching a class?

Current requirements mandate that all individuals are required to wear a face covering indoors or inside UCI controlled properties. Please refer to the Executive Directive on Face Coverings for current details: <https://uci.edu/coronavirus/executive-directives/executive-directive-face-coverings.pdf>.

There are a few ways to ensure that the voice is less affected by wearing face coverings when speaking. Choose face coverings with comfortable straps that will not restrict jaw and mouth movement. Consider wearing a clear mask to show non-verbal cues and allow lip-reading. Enunciate and speak slower for clearer sounding vowels. Use a microphone to reduce projection that could fatigue the voice. Use written supports such as handouts, visual aids or other instructions in class.