

COVID-19 Q&A

August 10, 2020

We spoke with Mike Rogers, Director of Facilities; Nancy Gibson, Director of Human Resources, and Bob Combs, Director of Security & Visitor Services about the ways in which all three Getty sites – Villa, Center, and the Library Annex – are being kept safe for staff.

Can you tell us what kinds of cleaning protocols are in place at all three sites?

Mike: We have maintained our full level of Uniserve staffing throughout the shutdown, so there are 90 Uniserve staff, working at all three locations, using hospital-grade cleaners and focusing on high-touch areas like doors, handrails, bathrooms, the central plant, workshops, etc. We recently bought the same electrostatic sprayers that are being used on airplanes, which electrically charge the cleaning solution so it adheres better to surfaces. We've been using them on grounds, in buildings, on vehicles, and on tools, and it greatly increases the speed and efficiency of cleaning. We work closely with County officials to ensure that we are meeting Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health standards for infection control.

I should also add that to further reduce the number of surfaces that people have to touch (and clean), we are replacing water faucets and flush handles in the restrooms with no-touch, automatic devices.

What's being done to clean and filter the circulated air in our workspaces?

Mike: Getty air handling units significantly exceed building code standards, delivering 20% outside air mixed with return air, which helps dilute pollutants. Some areas, like laboratories, deliver an even higher percentage of outside air. In addition, the air passes through multiple filters, further reducing particulates, again far beyond building code standards. In our office areas, we use high-quality filters with a MERV 14 rating, which are effective at capturing viruses.

MERV means Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value. The scale goes from 1 to 16, with 16 the highest. To put it in context, most retail stores have MERV 8 filters. Surgery suites have MERV 15-16 filters. Most of the Getty galleries feature MERV 16 filters.

The air handling units are maintained regularly by Getty Engineering to ensure safe and properly conditioned air.

What happens if a coworker comes down with COVID-19?

Nancy: As soon as Getty is made aware of an employee or contractor at one of our sites who has symptoms or has tested positive, we determine if there's anyone with whom that person has been in "close contact," which is defined by the CDC as contact at a distance of less than six feet for greater than 15 minutes, with or without a mask.

Those people are notified within 24 hours by either HR staff or the employee's supervisor/manager.

Will Getty tell us any time a co-worker or contract employee on site is ill or has tested positive?

Nancy: Getty must comply with strict laws that require we keep all medical information about employees confidential. We will notify staff who were in close contact with the person. The information that an employee has symptoms or a diagnosis of COVID-19 is medical information.

Is it true that Getty has to report COVID-19 cases to the Public Health Department?

Bob: Yes. The County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health requires a place of business to report cases if there have been three positive cases within a 14-day period, which was the case at the Getty last month. Working with HR and Facilities, Security provides the necessary information to the health department.

How is Getty enforcing social distancing?

Mike: In the café, tables and chairs have been removed to create proper distances. They have also been added outside. Plexiglass now separates servers from staff in the cafes, and food and drinks are served in a no-touch style – no more grab-and-go. Circles on the floor in the cafeteria line designate where people should stand as they await their food.

A reduced number of passengers are allowed on shuttles, and Plexiglass has been installed to separate the driver from passengers.

Elevators are marked for four people only, with circles in each corner marking where they should stand. A ride in an elevator is too brief to be considered close contact, but social distancing will still be practiced. Some additional stairways have been opened up to serve as alternates to elevators and we are encouraging staff who are able to use the stairs to consider doing so.

Pantries have been closed across the Getty, and the dishes and utensils removed. People are not allowed to use refrigerators, coffeemakers, dishwashers, or microwaves.

Conference rooms are closed, and even if people are on site together, they are encouraged to use Zoom or talk on the phone.

What about masks?

Mike: Definitely! Masks are mandatory on site, no exceptions. They need to completely cover the mouth and nose, and they cannot have valves. You can wear your own, or we will provide them. Fortunately, we have a strong culture of safety at the Getty, and people are conscientious about wearing their masks. There are also signs around the site reminding people to wear them, and demonstrating the proper way to do so.

What if we see someone not practicing social distancing or not wearing a mask -- or not wearing a mask properly?

Bob: You can notify your department head or Program administrator, or a Security Manager/Supervisor if you observe anyone not following established safety protocols. If you don't know which manager or supervisor is on duty, you can always call the Control Room (Getty Center ext. 7001 or Getty Villa ext. 6001) to ask who is on duty. You can also report your concerns anonymously via [this link](#).

What is Getty doing to enforce these policies on site?

Bob: To provide an additional safeguard, beginning today we are adding an additional Security Supervisor at the Center and Villa who will be tasked with monitoring adherence to safety measures across the site. They will be watching for employees or contractors who may not be wearing a mask properly, ensuring that the temperature devices are in good working order, and regularly visiting areas where construction or other work is taking place.

There seems to be an increase in maintenance work around the sites right now. Are contractors working on site subject to the same safety requirements as staff?

Mike: Yes, contractors are subject to the same worksite safety rules for social distancing and the wearing of face coverings as Getty staff. Contractors are provided the City of Los Angeles COVID-19 protocols for performing construction work, and both Facilities and Security monitor the contractors.

If we are reassessing and postponing the return of additional staff to our sites, why are we requiring staff from Phase 2A to continue to report to the site?

Nancy: Getty is following state and county orders for workplaces, offices and museums. County Public Health orders permit staff on site in order to do essential work, such as securing and maintaining Getty properties and collections, providing resources so that other staff can continue working from home, and conducting essential business functions, like payroll. When we were anticipating opening to the public in August, the County order would also have allowed us to bring in more employees, including more office workers. However, both the state and LA County reversed that order two weeks ago, and required indoor museums to remain closed. Those employees who have been on site since the initial closure, as well as a few additional staff who have been added since, do work that we consider essential to our business.