COVID Modified Occupancy

COVID modified occupancy (CMO) is based on how many people can use a given space simultaneously while remaining six feet apart given the configuration of the room, furniture and any equipment. This is different than the State Fire Code which allows a set number of people per square foot for a particular use of the space. It is important that the CMO never exceeds the State Fire Code nor should rearrangement of furniture or equipment result in any fire code violation.

The following are guidelines for calculating the CMO for different space types found on campus. Note that “normal capacity” refers to the number of people normally allowed in the given space. Once determined, the CMO should be posted on the entry to the space to inform persons entering the space.

In an open, unfurnished area, a rule of thumb is 36 ft² per person which provided six feet between people side to side and front to back. To ensure that people maintain distancing from other occupants, it is often helpful to use seating or other furnishings to define how people space themselves in a room.

Please feel free to email ehs@nccu.edu with any questions.

Building Entry/Reception

Every entrance area/lobby is unique and requires some effort to determine CMO. If the area largely functions as a hallway or vestibule, it should be treated as such. If there is a reception/greeting function, the CMO must account for staff working in the area plus the number of people who can gather at one time while remaining 6 feet apart and not blocking any egress pathways.

*Rough guideline: 20-30% of normal capacity*

Stairs, Elevators, and Hallways

The CMO for elevators is set at 2 persons with signage designating spots to stand to allow maximum distance between occupants.

Rather than establishing a CMO for stairs and hallways, signage will be used to denote the direction of traffic in these areas.

Common Areas / Computer Labs

To calculate the CMO in areas where persons gather, remove enough seating so that the remaining seats are at least 6 feet apart in all directions. Alternatively, if items cannot be removed, signs and other items should be used to block off seats and equipment that should not be used to facilitate distancing. The resulting number of seats dictates the CMO for the room/area.

*Rough guideline: 40-50% of normal capacity*
Meeting Rooms

To calculate CMO, remove enough chairs (or block off chairs with signage/tape) around the conference table that the remaining chairs are at least 6 feet apart. If the table is too narrow to provide 6 feet of distance across the table, then seating must be staggered so as to maintain this distance diagonally. The resulting number of seats is the CMO for the room and the locations of the chairs should be marked on the table.

*Rough guidelines: 40-50% of normal capacity*

Individual workspaces (i.e. private office)

Other than very large offices, individual workspaces (as defined by having a door and walls with a single desk) should be limited to a single occupant. Visitors chairs should be removed unless there is sufficient room to maintain 6 feet of distance between occupant and visitor. It is encouraged that meetings continue to be held online.

Shared workspaces (i.e. open office)

To calculate the CMO in an open/shared office area, first determine if the existing desks/cubicles can be configured to provide at least 6 feet of social distancing between workers. If so, the CMO is the number of workstations (i.e. no visitors.) If workstations need to be modified or reduced to meet social distancing requirements, then the resulting number of workstations is the CMO.

*Rough guideline: 60-80% of normal capacity*

Classrooms, Lecture Halls, Auditoriums

CMO for classrooms and lecture halls is based on the number of seats that can realistically be used while keeping students 6 feet apart, plus the instructor. For lecture halls with fixed, auditorium style seating, the typical configuration is that every other row must be kept empty and in the occupied rows only two out of every three seats may be used. An alternative is to use every row but stagger the seats to achieve 6 feet of space diagonally. In either case, the resulting number of useable seats plus the instructor is the CMO and “unusable” seats must be so marked.

*For classrooms and lecture halls with moveable seating and/or tables*, excess seating is removed or marked out of use until only enough seats remain to achieve the required social distancing. The resulting number of seats plus the instructor is the CMO.

*Rough guideline: Fixed seating 20-30%; Flexible seating 30-40% of normal capacity*

Research Laboratories

The CMO for laboratories is the number of workstations that can be occupied at one time while keeping occupants 6 feet apart. Keep in mind that social distancing requirements apply not only to adjacent workstations on the same bench, but also those behind and across from a given workstation.

*Rough guideline: 40-50% of normal capacity*

Food Service Areas

The CMO for food service areas (cafeterias, coffee shops, etc.) should usually be broken down into food preparation, food sales/service, and seating areas.

CMO for food preparation areas is the number of people who can work in the area at the same time while maintaining at least 6 feet of social distancing.
CMO for food sales/service areas (i.e. where consumers order/select/pick up their meals) is the number of employees plus the total number of counter workstations where customers can pick up and pay for their food, plus the number of people who can reasonable wait in line while remaining at least 6 feet apart.

CMO for seating areas, if not eliminated altogether, is based on the number of chairs available when tables are placed at least 6 feet apart with no more than two chairs per table.

Rough guideline: 20-30% of normal capacity

Fitness and Athletic Facilities

The CMO for fitness/athletic facilities are broken down into exercise areas, locker rooms, and shower areas.

For exercise areas, the Modified Occupancy is the number of people who can use equipment in the given area while maintaining at least 6 feet of social distancing. (Any equipment less than 6 feet apart must be removed or marked off. Any activities requiring close contact, such as spotting are prohibited.

For locker rooms, the CMO is based on either one locker for every six linear feet, or the number of people who can be seated on locker room benches while at least six feet apart, whichever is less.

For shower areas, the Modified Occupancy is the number of people who can fit in the shower area at one time while remaining 6 feet apart.

General guideline: Exercise areas 20-30%; Locker rooms 10-20%; Showers 20-30%

Bathrooms

The CMO is the number of people who can simultaneously use bathroom facilities while remaining at least six feet apart. Depending on the specific bathroom, this will generally be the number of commodes plus half the urinals. Note that in most instances, half the urinals and half the sinks must be taped off and not used.

General guideline: 50-60%