

Recommendations for Greek Housing from Public Health – Seattle & King County

Recommendations

The following recommendations are suggested by Public Health – Seattle & King County to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in Greek housing communities.

De-densify housing

Consider ways to reduce the density of students living in Greek housing. If students are able to stay at their permanent residence and attend classes virtually, encourage them to do so. If they are able to live in another safe and healthy housing situation, such as an off-campus apartment with a small number of roommates, that is also a good option. Students who have no other safe and healthy options for housing should be prioritized for housing at their Greek organization.

Best: Each student has an individual unit with private bathroom.

Acceptable: Groups of 2-4 students have individual bedrooms and shared bathrooms. Consider de-densifying units of four students to fewer such as units of two.

Shared bathrooms: Bathrooms in Greek housing typically serve a large number of students (**greater than 4**). Greek housing managers should find ways to limit the number of students using the same bathroom. If possible, assign students to specific bathrooms and limit the number of students using the bathroom at the same time.

Sleeping porch and bunks: Students share bedrooms in “sleeping porch” style with multiple bunk beds in a single room. **Greek housing managers should take**

measures to de-densify this type of sleeping situation.

Public Health does not recommend the use of bunk beds, because they may increase the risk of spreading COVID-19 due to the close proximity while sleeping. Greek housing providers should actively work with students and their higher education institution on identifying alternative, safe housing for students so that students do not occupy densely populated sleeping porches and bunks. If sleeping porches are necessary to maintain **because students have no other housing options that would equally protect their health**, Greek housing providers should take the following **mitigating** measures:

- Ensure that beds are 6 feet apart or further from others.
- Limit the number of students per sleeping porch to as few as possible, preferably one student per bunk or fewer. If students must share bunks, arrange head-to-toe both horizontally and vertically.
- Greek housing providers should work with their national organization and other Greek housing providers on developing other mechanisms that would lower the risk of disease transmission, such as barriers between bunks or beds.

Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfection

Greek organizations should:

- Install hand-sanitizing stations in entryways, dining areas, and high-traffic areas
- Increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces, including but not limited to doorknobs, light switches, television remotes, and other surfaces that many people might touch. Follow the [CDC guidance on How to Clean & Disinfect](#).

Individual recommendations

All members living in Greek Housing are recommended to do the following:

- Self-monitor for [symptoms](#) and have a plan for how to get [tested](#) and what to do if you do get sick
- Follow university recommendations and procedures for self-monitoring and self-reporting
- Wear masks in common areas of the house
- Follow public health guidance to practice excellent hand hygiene, avoid touching the face, cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing, maintain six feet of distance from others, and stay home when ill

Revisit house's guest policies

Public Health – Seattle & King County strongly encourages Greek organizations to [significantly limit or prohibit guests in Greek housing](#) to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 from guests. As King County and Washington State continue through the Safe Start phases of reopening, social distancing recommendations will continue to loosen. Policies may be evaluated at each phase to adhere to the Governor's Safe Start phased approach.

House staff

Limit house staff to only [essential services](#), such as preparing meals and housekeeping. Consider assigning employees at high risk for COVID-19 to duties that don't involve close contact with others. People at high risk include people who are over age 60, have underlying health conditions, or pregnant. All staff should be screened for COVID-19 symptoms before coming on site and should stay home if they have symptoms.

Meals

Many Greek houses provide meals and dining services to their members. Many students rely on this for most of their meals, so students may face higher risks of disease transmission than the general population who may dine outside their homes occasionally. Greek dining facilities should take this higher risk into account in their operations and consider additional measures that go beyond the State restaurant guidance as King County moves through the phases of the Governor's [Safe Start plan](#) to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Prepare for positive cases

Each Greek organization should work with the higher education institution to develop a plan for what to do when someone living in Greek housing tests positive for COVID-19. A plan should include:

- Safely isolating students who have tested positive. If this cannot be done within the house, consider utilizing a King County Isolation and Quarantine Center. Call the King County COVID-19 Call Center to see if isolation and quarantine services are a good fit.
 - Phone #: (206) 477-3977 Hours: 8 AM – 10 PM daily
- Ensure students who have tested positive and are in isolation have everything they need including food and medications
- Measures to take in the event of a cluster of cases, indicating transmission within the house or larger university community

Follow other Public Health Recommendations

Public Health – Seattle & King County has issued and reaffirmed Housing Guidance for Higher Education Institutions that can be found at www.kingcounty.gov/covid/student-housing. These recommendations should be applied to students living in Greek Housing to the greatest extent possible, while ensuring students have access to the healthiest possible housing.