



SSH Simulation Program Policy and Procedure Manual Model Template



**Addendum:
Pandemic Reentry Policy Considerations in a Pandemic**

Updated: January 2021

About This Addendum

In 2020, an international team of authors from various healthcare simulation programs was established with the purpose of creating policy and procedure considerations for simulation programs to have in place when performing simulation activities in the time of a pandemic (COVID-19 for 2020):

Simulation Program Reentry Policy Considerations in a Pandemic

This team was comprised of experienced members in simulation program operations, administration, and management. The team was tasked to create a template for SSH members to utilize as a foundation for the creation of their own policy and procedure for reopening simulation programs and performing simulation activities safely.

This addendum outlines commonly accepted practices and serves as a general model for simulation programs to follow when developing their policy and procedure. Core topics are outlined, and each topic includes a brief description to assist in understanding the potential application.

When using this template, programs should feel free to edit, add to or omit topics depending on the specific needs of their organization. The result will be a customized “Policy and Procedure” addressing fundamental issues to efficiently and effectively operate a simulation program within the constraints and influences of a pandemic.

IMPORTANT: rules, protocols, and guidance regarding COVID-19 (and other pandemics) changes over time. Your policies should be frequently reviewed to ensure compliance with the latest recommendations, and written in a way that makes updates based on new recommendations an easy process.

Contributing Authors

Michele L. Kuszajewski, DNP, RN, CHSE; Lead Author; Task Force Co-Chair

Assistant Director, Center for Nursing Discovery
Duke University School of Nursing
Durham, NC; USA

Thomas Dongilli AT, CHSOS, FSSH; Task Force Co-Chair

Director of Operations- Winter Institute for Simulation, Education, and Research (WISER)
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, PA; USA

Jesika S. Gavilanes, MA

Operations Director, Mark Richardson Interprofessional Simulation Center (MRISC)
Oregon Health & Science University
Portland, OR; USA

Kris Hara, MEd, RRT, CHSOS

Operations Director, Chief Simulation Specialist
SimTiki Simulation Center
University of Hawaii
Honolulu, HI; USA

Valerie M. Howard EdD, MSN, RN, CNE, ANEF, FAAN

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
Professor of Nursing
Duke University School of Nursing
Durham, NC; USA

Ilya Shekhter, MS, MBA, CHSE

Director of Simulation Operations
University of Miami – Jackson Memorial Hospital Center for Patient Safety
Miami, FL; USA

Jeannette Wong, MPA, RN

Director, Health Sciences Simulation Center (HSSC)
Assistant Professor
Samuel Merritt University
Oakland, CA; USA

Table of Contents

1. “Essential” Activities	6
a. General guidelines	
b. Definition	
2. Scheduling Considerations	6
a. General guidelines	
3. Mask requirements	6
a. Guidance from the parent organization	
b. When to wear masks	
c. What type of mask	
d. How to get masks	
4. Covid-19 Screening	7
a. Guidance from the parent organization	
b. Screening method	
c. Screening outcome	
5. Signage	7
a. Safety precautions Overview	
b. Door signs	
c. Chair decals	
d. Floor decals	
6. Cleaning Policies	7
a. General guidelines	
b. Adequate ventilation and personal protective equipment (PPE)	
c. Cleaning solutions	
d. Cleaning the simulation space	
e. Cleaning of manikins/ task trainers	
f. Linens	
g. Cleaning of the workspace	
h. Cleaning after each simulation use/ activity	
i. A checklist	
7. Required spacing and maximum capacity of events	9
a. General guidelines	
b. Physical distancing	
c. Density	
8. Symptoms at home	10
a. General guidelines	
b. Notifications	
c. Next steps	

9. Sick at work	10
a. General guidelines	
b. Notifications	
c. Next steps	
10. Potential exposure at work	10
a. General guidelines	
b. Course of action	
c. Contact tracing	
11. Donning and Doffing personal protective equipment (PPE)	11
a. General guidelines	
b. Education	
c. Sequence of donning and doffing PPE	

1. “Essential” Activities

- A. **General guidelines:** Assuming “essential activities” are the only lab/simulation sessions permitted in person or on campus, each center will need to define what “essential” activities are.
 - a. Consider a default policy that on-line skills training or virtual simulation will be the primary delivery system of skills training and simulation-based learning. Only “essential” activities will take place in the simulation center.
- B. **Definition:** Essential skills and simulation sessions are defined as:
 - a. The activity is required to assess the student’s readiness to progress to the next course or to meet graduation requirements (e.g. summative assessment).
 - b. The activity, after consultation with the Simulation Educators, cannot be achieved with any other modality or setting.
 - c. Competency demonstration of clinical skills that requires utilizing a manikin, task trainer or other simulation equipment only available in the simulation center.

2. Scheduling Considerations

- A. **General guidelines:** The following are points to consider when scheduling “essential” lab or simulation based learning sessions in the center during COVID.
 - a. Identify how many learners/faculty/teaching assistants can safely be in the lab and maintain physical distancing (lab capacity) – this will likely require more labs to accommodate the learners and maintain physical distancing.
 - b. Collaborate with the assigned screeners at your institution, to ensure they can manage the number of learners arriving at any one time.
 - c. Consider staggering start times of events.
 - d. Minimize the beds, stretchers, tables, etc. in the lab to allow for additional space.
 - e. Use hard surfaces for skills training versus beds and stretcher when possible since these are easier to clean.
 - f. Minimize use of linens. Consider not having linens on beds unless necessary.
 - g. Consider having learners meet in a large room, where they can practice physical distancing, for a prebrief. The prebrief can be used to provide clear instructions for the session, where they are going, what they will be doing. This can minimize the clustering of confused learners.
 - h. Allow sufficient time in between groups to disinfect and reset the rooms.
 - i. Consider scheduling groups of learners (e.g. 12 at a time) as a consistent cohort. This will make it easier for contact tracing and for minimizing potential exposure.

3. Mask requirements

- A. **Guidance from the parent organization:** In general, mask requirements should follow the guidelines of the parent organization. When the simulation program is governed by more than one organization (e.g., a hospital system and a university) and their masking guidelines are different, mask requirement for the staff, instructors, learners and visitors of the simulation program should be clearly spelled out.
- B. **When to wear masks:** The policy should specify where masks should be worn. For example, for learners participating in a group exercise masking should be mandatory whereas a lone learner engaged in self-directed ultrasound simulation could be given the option to wear a mask or not.

Similarly, staff and faculty members should wear a mask when interacting with learners but not necessarily when sitting at their desks.

- C. **What type of mask:** The policy should clarify whether cloth masks are allowed or if the only choice is medical-grade disposable masks.
- D. **How to get masks:** The policy should specify whether masks will be provided or if visitors should arrive with their own. Also, if the simulation program is providing masks, then the policy should state where the masks are stocked and who is responsible for the inventory.

4. Covid-19 Screening

- A. **Guidance from the parent organization:** In general, screening requirements, if any, should follow the guidelines of the parent organization.
- B. **Screening method:** As screening guidance from the CDC changes fairly frequently, it's best to focus on the process for choosing the screening method rather than describing the method itself.
- C. **Screening outcome:** The policy should specify what guidance is given to the individual that does not pass the screening test, e.g. should they reschedule when symptom-free, get tested, report to employee health, etc.

5. Signage

- A. **Safety precautions overview:** The measure taken by the simulation program to manage infection risk should be communicated to all staff, instructors, learners and visitors ahead of their visit. A summary should be posted at the point of entry and throughout the center.
- B. **Door signs:** A sign outside each room should specify the capacity for each room while adhering to physical distancing guidelines. Also, if a room has two doors, it may be helpful to designate one for entry and the other exit.
- C. **Chair decals:** To allow for physical distancing, some chairs should be marked off-limits with appropriate decals. If decals not available, consider removing extra furniture from the simulation spaces.
- D. **Floor decals:** To promote physical distancing and prevent crowding, floor can be marked with decals every X feet as recommended by the local authorities (e.g. 6 feet). Also, where possible, arrows can be placed on the floor to direct learner and visitor traffic and minimize the number of walkers moving in opposite directions to avoid clustering.

6. Cleaning Policies

- A. **General guidelines:** Follow institutional guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting when entering the simulation center and engaging in simulation activities. Cleaning plans should be based upon current guidance's provided by your country's agency(s) responsible for disease control. In the United States, these would include the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Develop clean policies identifying length of time for set-up and changeover, clean-up and disinfection when scheduling simulation activities. Consideration should be given to the size of space, type of activity, number of staff and participants, equipment and supplies used. Note that the CDC refers to cleaning as the removal of germs and impurities – visibly dirty surfaces prior to disinfection. If an area has been unoccupied for the last 7 days, routine normal cleaning can be completed before reopening the area.

- B. **Adequate ventilation and personal protective equipment (PPE):** Ventilation and PPE should be provided during cleaning activities. Wearing disposable gloves to clean and disinfect and consideration of eye protection for potential splash hazards should be included. Proper removal of gloves and hand hygiene should be included in the policy.
- C. **Cleaning solutions:** The policy should include the solutions appropriate to the material being cleaned or disinfected and type of contagion being disinfected. Disinfectants for use against COVID-19 are listed in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's List N. All products should be appropriately used and stored. Solutions recommended include bleach or alcohol solutions. Examples of mixtures include:
- To make a bleach solution, mix 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of room temperature water or 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of room temperature water. Leave solution on the surface for at least 1 minute. Bleach solutions will be effective for disinfection up to 24 hours.
 - Alcohol solutions (wipes or sprays) containing at least 70% alcohol may also be used.
 - Ensure workers are trained on the hazards of the cleaning chemicals used in the workplace in accordance with OSHA's Hazard Communication standards.
- D. **Cleaning the simulation space:** General housekeeping of common areas may be completed by environmental services, including trained simulation staff using appropriate PPE to clean/disinfect especially high touch surfaces such as handles, touch screens, manikins and simulation equipment, microphones and headphones, computer keyboards, chairs, and tables between simulation instances.
- Consider cleaning surfaces using soap and water, then use disinfectant. Cleaning with soap and water reduces number of germs, and dirt on the surface while disinfecting kills germs
 - Recommend use of EPA-registered household disinfectant, bleach or alcohol solution.
 - Follow the instructions on the product labels to ensure safe and effective use of the product including the period of wet and dry time.
- E. **Cleaning of manikins/ task trainers:** A two-step process is recommended for cleaning of manikins/ task trainers.
- Soap and water and then wipe with 70% alcohol solution. Allow to dry for 2-5 min.
 - Clean between each learner use.
 - Do not use any abrasives or scrubbing, as this may create microscopic holes in the "skin" which can lead to an area for the virus to accumulate
- F. **Linens:** If linens are utilized during this time the policy should include how to safely handle and dispose of. Consider removing linens from beds and placing manikins/ task trainers directly on mattress surface during pandemic.
- Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry.
 - Do not shake dirty laundry to minimize risk of spreading contaminants.
 - Clean and disinfect clothes hampers according to guidance for soft surfaces.
 - After handling linens, remove gloves and wash hands right away.
- G. **Cleaning of the workspace:** Individual and shared work spaces such as offices or control rooms should be cleaned following the institutional guidelines.
- Whenever possible, avoid sharing desks, computers, cups, silverware or other objects used near the mouth/nose.

- b. Adequate PPE, hand sanitizer, surface disinfectants and handwashing facilities should be readily available for all users.
- H. **Cleaning after each simulation use/ activity**
 - a. Consider using wipeable or changeable coverings for equipment, for example microphones and headsets.
 - b. Disinfect high touch equipment and supplies such as but not limited to keyboards, phones, laryngoscope handles, ECG leads, bag-valve-mask setups, manikin pulse areas, bed railings frequently.
 - c. Equipment or supplies that cannot be cleaned adequately between use can be separated to a dirty room.
 - d. Rooms that are not ready for use should have signage indicating that cleaning/disinfection needs to be completed.
 - e. Soft surfaces such as bedsheets and patient gowns should be removed without vigorous shaking, stored in a disposable bag and washed with the hottest water setting for that type of fabric. Some simulation centers have opted to use limited or no bedsheets to allow efficient cleaning of the bed between use.
- I. **A checklist:** A checklist can be utilized by both simulation staff and simulated patients to ensure each step is followed. The policy should be available to help staff complete cleaning and disinfecting procedures, including procurement, storage, and discarding used PPE and products.

7. Required spacing and maximum capacity of events

- A. **General Guidelines:** Limiting density and providing space for physical distancing while in the simulation center can minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission and infection. The CDC and WHO have guidelines for the number of personnel in an area based upon the types of activities. Guidelines for limiting density include remaining at a 6 feet distance from others and wearing masks.
- B. **Physical distancing:** Consider policies with instruction of physical distancing.
 - a. For activities that require contact less than 6 feet, the use of a mask and proper hand sanitizing can reduce the spread of infection.
 - b. Activities within close proximity of others due to the learning objectives should be limited to less than 10 minutes each.
 - c. Activities that can be completed virtually, such as prebriefing and debriefing, should be continued to be conducted virtually as long as the learning environment is maintained.
 - d. Keeping in mind the principles of limiting density and providing a 6 foot perimeter around each occupant, the simulation center will need to calculate the maximum capacity for the center and each room in the center.
 - e. Engineering teams at each institution can assist in guiding the calculations for capacity of the simulation centers and rooms, being mindful of square footage of the facility and the ventilation of the rooms.
 - f. Simulation educators, instructors, standardized patients and operations technicians must be included in calculating the maximum capacity of each area.
- C. **Density:** Consider density during the start and stop of simulation based educational interventions.
 - a. Make effort to 'stagger' times for movement between rooms in halls and other spaces.

- b. In order to decrease density, consider using alternative schedules for multiple small groups, extending into evening and weekend times for training.

8. Symptoms at home

A. **General guidelines:** If any employee or learner exhibits symptoms of COVID-19, they should be instructed to stay home, thereby limiting exposure to COVID-19 in the simulation center.

A. Notifications:

- a. Call or email your manager immediately stating that you will not be in the office, that you have symptoms, and you will want to determine the closest testing site.

B. Next steps:

- a. Based on advice from your provider or institution, determine testing sites.
- b. Minimize contact with anyone in your home.
- c. Wait for your results and then communicate to your manager if you are negative or positive. If you test positive for COVID-19 you will need to follow the contact tracing protocols and communicate per institution and state policy.
- d. Follow your institutional protocols.
- e. Per CDC guidelines you will want to stay home, except to go for medical care and avoid any public transportation. [<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html#:~:text=Stay%20home.,Do%20not%20visit%20public%20areas.>]

9. Sick at work

A. **General guidelines:** Prior to entry at work you will have gone through the required screening. The policy should include who to contact and what to do if you become sick at work.

B. Notifications:

- a. Immediately notify center's leadership/ manager

C. Next steps:

- a. Employee or learner will need to go home immediately to rest and contact their doctor.
- b. Minimize contact with anyone and avoid public transportation if possible.
- c. Follow provider's advice and institutional protocols regarding length of stay at home and required testing for reentry.
- d. Refer now to the Symptoms at Home policy.
- e. Per CDC guidelines here are protocols for when you would return to work <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/returning-to-work.html>

10. Potential exposure at work

A. **General guidelines:** All employees and learners should be conducting daily symptom monitoring during the pandemic. However, since asymptomatic carriers of COVID-19 have been identified, there may be an incidence where a COVID-19 positive person is in the simulation environment. Therefore, Simulation Centers should plan for those who experience a potential exposure to a COVID-19 positive learner, instructor or other personnel while working in the simulation center.

B. **Course of Action:** The course of action after a potential exposure to a COVID-19 positive patient depends upon the role of the person in the simulation lab.

- a. Students/ Learners: The process for reporting a student with a positive exposure is usually guided by the university or school policies and procedures. This process should align with these procedures and usually involves submitting a report to student health.

- b. Employees: The process for reporting an employee with a positive exposure is usually guided by the Employee or Occupational Health Office of the institution.
- c. For simulation centers that are not supported by Student or Employee/Occupational Health, consider suggesting a mandatory 14-day quarantine after a COVID-19 exposure and reporting to the local health department for implementation of contact tracing.
- C. **Contact Tracing:** In most cases, either Student or Employee / Occupational Health will perform symptom monitoring and contact tracing to identify those who may have been exposed.
 - a. It is important to keep a daily log of people who have entered the simulation lab or center and the length of time in the environment.
 - b. Persons should be notified of potential exposure in the simulation lab based upon the protocols in place at Student or Employee / Occupational Health.

11. Donning and doffing personal protective equipment (PPE)

- A. **General guidelines:** The policy should include information regarding donning (putting on) and doffing (taking off) of gloves and masks as well as proper hand hygiene/ hand washing.
- B. **Education:** Provide education on the appropriate steps for donning and doffing of PPE. Follow your parent organization and CDC for guidelines.
 - a. Consider the type of PPE that you are donning and doffing and follow the best practice recommendations.
 - b. Keep hands away from face
 - c. Limit surfaces touched
 - d. Change gloves when torn or heavily contaminated
 - e. Perform hand hygiene
- C. **Sequence of donning and doffing PPE:** Refer to CDC recommendations regarding sequencing and appropriate equipment and be sure to include steps for when to perform hand hygiene.
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/hai/pdfs/ppe/ppe-sequence.pdf>. and
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/using-ppe.html>
 - a. Donning
 - 1. Gown
 - 2. Mask or face shield
 - 3. Goggles
 - 4. Gloves
 - b. Doffing
 - 1. Gloves
 - 2. Goggles
 - 3. Gown
 - 4. Mask or face shield
 - c. Immediate hand hygiene

References:

Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities. (2020, April). Retrieved from https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-04/documents/316485-c_reopeningamerica_guidance_4.19_6pm.pdf.

Cleaning and Disinfection for Households. (2020, May 27). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html>.

Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes. (2020, April 29). Retrieved from <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/guidance-cleaning-and-disinfecting-public-spaces-workplaces-businesses-schools-and-homes>.

CDC. (2020, April 30). Communities, Schools, Workplaces, & Events. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>.

