

Guidance for Students Retrieving Belongings from Residence Halls

The Executive Office of Education (EOE) and the Department of Higher Education (DHE), in coordination with the Department of Public Health (DPH), offer the following guidance to assist public and private Institutions of Higher Education (institution) in managing the removal of remaining student belongings from residence halls that were vacated in response to the COVID19 outbreak.

Who does this guidance apply to? This guidance applies to any public or private Institution of Higher Education in the Commonwealth facilitating the removal of student belongings from residence halls or other storage spaces on campus. This includes the safe and secure return of individuals to campus who live locally and can remove their belongings themselves, as well as the safe and secure removal of belongings on behalf of students who cannot return to campus due to health, travel, or other restrictions.

What process should an institution follow for students residing within driving distance of the campus?

For students who are within driving distance of a campus, institutions should **assign time slots** with staggered times to allow proper social distancing to be maintained. The time slot assignments should consider the time necessary to:

- enter and exit residence halls
- pack belongings (including additional staggering of times for spaces shared by multiple students)
- load belongings into vehicles

Prior to allowing students to return to campus for their assigned time slots, institutions should **provide information to students and their families** regarding:

- All individuals onsite at the institution wearing face masks and adhering to social distancing guidelines at all times, as required by [COVID-19 Order No. 31](#)
- How the student or the institution will ensure that only one student is in a room at a time if the room is shared by multiple students.
- Limiting the number of individuals who accompany the student, ideally to one person.
- The approximate amount of time that students will have to complete the move out, ideally less than two hours to maximize the ability to maintain social distancing and avoid gatherings.
- Sanitizing any equipment that the institution provides to assist in the move.
- Staggering use of elevators and stairwells.

During the move out, institutions should provide clear and consistent communication, signage, and other tools to remind students and families of public health protocols and have sufficient staff onsite to manage the process and ensure that guidance is being followed.

If students return from out of state to retrieve belongings, and are able to return directly to their current place of residence, do they need to adhere to the 14 day out of state travel quarantine request? No. As long as students and anyone accompanying them complete the move out process in the assigned period of time and then return to their home state, there is no need for them to quarantine in Massachusetts.

What if students cannot return to an institution to retrieve their belongings due to health, travel, or other restrictions, or an institution chooses not to allow any students to return to campus to retrieve their belongings? If a student is not able to return to campus because they are currently residing out of

state (not within reasonable driving distance), residing internationally, or otherwise unable to return safely under current public health guidance, or if an institution feels it is in their best interest not to allow any students back on campus for this purpose, institutions should offer the student the opportunity to have a small number of boxes of essential belongings to be shipped to their current residence. The belongings could be packed by staff members or other individuals that the campus and student agree could serve as a proxy for the student. Any move-outs by proxy should follow the same guidelines as stated above for the complete move-out process.

For the student's remaining belongings, institutions should consider:

- Allowing a proxy to remove student belongings, provided the campus and the student agree on the process through which the proxy would come to campus, and secure any waivers that may need to be signed.
- Allowing the student to leave the belongings in the room(s) if they are not needed for another purpose at this time, such as providing housing support for COVID-19 efforts, and securing the room, until the student is able to retrieve them.
- Packing and storing the belongings on or off campus, at a secure location, until the student is able to retrieve them.

If the institution packs and stores belongings on behalf of the student, the institution should communicate the process and time allowed for storage of belongings and provide clear communication to the student about any costs the student will incur.

What if a current or prospective student or family requests a campus visit for another reason? Travel to campus for any other reason than the necessity to retrieve belongings from a residence hall is discouraged during Reopening Massachusetts- Phase 1 "Start". Campus visits for any other purpose should be conducted in a virtual or otherwise appropriate remote manner until the institution has a plan for future phases of the reopening of institutions, following additional public health guidance.