



Dear Residents,

As many of you are aware, Columbia University has been sending regular updates in reference to COVID-19. The following communication has been prepared specific to residents of Columbia Residential Housing to outline changes to building operations and expectations while we navigate the next few weeks and beyond.

We are all living through a very difficult time, and we know that this situation creates a lot of questions for residents in Columbia buildings. Columbia Residential central office and building staff will do our part and our best to help our residents, employees and partners get through this trying period.

The actions outlined in this message are now advised and are consistent with industry best practices and interim guidance issued by [Columbia Preparedness](#), the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), Department of Health (DOH) and Office of Emergency Management (OEM). These are temporary, proactive and protective measures while we learn more about what we should be doing to make informed decisions about building specific operations.

## Shut Down of Building Amenities and Suspension of Certain Operations

1. Where applicable, building amenities have been shut down effective immediately. Amenities include, but are not limited to, gyms, playrooms, and recreation rooms. While considered to be amenities, garages, bicycle and general storage areas, as well as laundry rooms will remain open unless we receive guidance otherwise or are left with limited staff, at which time they may be shut down with little or no notice.

While we cannot predict for how long these amenities spaces will remain closed, you can rest assured that Columbia Residential has access to and is consulting with NYC's DOH and OEM, as well as industry-experts, on a daily basis and, in consultation with the University, will make prudent adjustments as necessary.

2. Move-ins and large deliveries will be prohibited until further notice, unless pre-approved by Columbia Residential. Large deliveries are defined as those deliveries that require a reservation of the passenger or service elevator, or, those requiring more than one round trip to deliver the item (i.e. furniture, materials, etc.). Move-outs may continue as long as residents follow the [move-out guidelines outlined on our website](#).
3. Appointments for the showing of apartments will be discontinued.
4. Effective immediately, residents must come to the lobby to retrieve mail, dry-cleaning, food deliveries, medications and other packages. If you have a known general medical or other condition that does not allow you to come to the lobby to retrieve packages, please advise your superintendent immediately.
5. All other building related services (i.e. front desk services, porter services, garbage pick-up, and emergency repairs by in-house staff) will continue as close to normal as is possible, with enhanced protocols that have been issued to building staff, but are subject to change with little or no notice.

## What to prepare for

1. Employees may begin calling out sick. It is therefore prudent to prepare yourself for some diminution of services, including the following possibilities:
  - a. Reallocation of available employees to different responsibilities and to different shifts (i.e. reallocating door attendants and handymen to porter services and vice-versa).
  - b. Buildings with multiple entrances may only have one entrance available for ingress and egress into and out of the building.
  - c. Volunteering for performing essential building services such as security, lobby coverage, mail sorting and garbage collection.
2. Delays in obtaining essential outside building services including mechanical systems (boiler/hot water heaters, elevators, circulation and other pumps, water distribution systems, etc.), building supplies, trades for general repairs and maintenance and other outside services.

## Building Staffing Matters

1. In the near future, building staff may be instructed not to enter any apartment unless there is an emergency (i.e. an immediate health/safety issue for a resident or a condition within the apartment requiring immediate attention).
2. If staff must enter your apartment, they are permitted and encouraged, to ask the following questions before entering your apartment:
  - a. Has anyone in the apartment had fever, cough and/or shortness of breath?
  - b. In the last 14 days, has anyone in your apartment traveled outside the United States or recently had contact with a person suspected or confirmed to be infected with COVID-19?
  - c. Have you had contact with a person who is has been exposed to COVID-19?
3. If you answer “yes” to any of the questions above and the repair can be postponed, building staff has been instructed to postpone the work and to not enter your apartment.
4. If you answer “yes” to any of the questions above and the repair cannot be postponed, building staff will politely ask you and/or other individuals in your apartment who answer “yes” to do the following:
  - a. Where possible, remain in a separate room with the door closed.
  - b. If a separate room is not available, maintain at least a 6-foot distance from the staff member(s).
  - c. Building staff may refuse to enter your apartment at their choosing.
5. Generally, building staff has been instructed to maintain a social distance of six feet (CDC guidance) when interacting with residents. Building staff have been instructed to increase the cleaning schedules for high-touch and high-traffic areas.

## Columbia Residential Staffing Matters

1. Like all service businesses, Columbia Residential is contending with the impacts of COVID-19. While we will endeavor to avoid any significant service interruptions, there are circumstances that may arise that are beyond our control, including possibly having to shut down our offices and working to the best of our abilities from home.
2. The Columbia Residential office on West 119<sup>th</sup> Street will operate by appointment only. To request an appointment, residents should email [residential@columbia.edu](mailto:residential@columbia.edu). If we must shut down our offices, we previously communicated the measures we have taken to continue operating remotely. However, please be prepared for the following possibilities:
  - a. Suspension of non-essential administrative functions (i.e. obtaining a reference letter, sample COI, sample documents, etc.).
  - b. Delays in obtaining general account information (i.e. account balances, payment histories, occupant ledgers, etc.).
  - c. Delays in the posting of account payments.
  - d. Delays in the processing of apartment alteration applications.

## How to Protect Yourself, Your Friends, and Your Family

1. We encourage all residents to follow social distancing guidelines at all times for the protection of yourselves and your friends and families. This means:
  - a. Keep at least six feet between yourself and other people whenever possible.
  - b. Avoid handshakes, hugging and other close contact.
  - c. Do not share food and drink.
2. Also, we remind you of the simple prevention techniques that also reduce the risk of transmission:
  - a. Wash your hands with soap and water often, for at least 20 seconds every time, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
  - b. Do not touch your face unless you recently washed your hands.
  - c. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or sleeve when sneezing or coughing. Do not use your hands.
  - d. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  - e. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Please understand that if you do not do this, you may jeopardize your own health or increase risk to other people, particularly those who are more vulnerable. We know these changes are not easy as we face this global health crisis together.

## Self-Quarantine

1. If you fit the criteria for self-quarantine as identified by [Columbia Health](#) and the [CDC](#), we ask that you please consider notifying your superintendent immediately so they can implement precautionary and preventive measures.

2. The CDC has urged anyone who has any of the foregoing conditions to be quarantined for at least 14 days. We are asking any resident with these conditions to self-quarantine in their apartment, or if possible, at another location. If you opt to self-quarantine in your apartment, the following should be observed:
  - a. Notify the superintendent or building staff in advance of any need to leave the building (and in advance of returning).
  - b. Please maintain social distancing and do not congregate or otherwise loiter in the building's lobby or other common areas unnecessarily.
  
3. For residents under quarantine, please contact your superintendent or building staff to:
  - a. Schedule garbage pick-up.
  - b. Notify the Superintendent of expected deliveries.

The safety of our residents, employees and community-members is of utmost importance. That said, we respect the privacy of our residents as well as the privacy of staff members. Accordingly, to comply with federal, state and local privacy laws, we cannot disclose a resident's medical condition, nor can we disclose an employee's medical condition or any other information which would potentially identify any individual who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or may have been exposed to COVID-19.

## Supporting Local Businesses

Columbia University has a long-standing retail approach that favors local businesses while curating a variety of amenities and experiences that appeal to the diverse Columbia community and surrounding neighborhood. The restrictions in place for food and beverage establishments – coupled with the necessary social distancing recommendations – has made this a difficult time for small, local businesses like so many in Columbia's retail portfolio.

Very soon, [our website](#) will be updated to include a list of Columbia retail tenants that are currently open and providing takeout and delivery services. We wanted to make you aware that these businesses are open and encourage you to support these businesses should you be able.

Thank you for your attention and support during this trying time.

Best regards,

**Columbia Residential**

401 West 119th Street

New York, NY 10027

(212) 854-9300

[residential@columbia.edu](mailto:residential@columbia.edu)

<http://columbia.edu/residential>