



**Opening AXΩ:  
Guidelines for Returning  
to the Chapter Facility**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The health and safety of Alpha Chi Omega's members, volunteers and guests, as well as Pearl Stone Partners employees, is our number one priority. As colleges and universities are making decisions about the fall, Alpha Chi Omega is working to prepare our facilities for necessary changes to meet the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In consultation with resources provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); the World Health Organization (WHO); our national insurance provider, MJ Insurance; and the National Housing Corporation's facility operations management partner, CSL Management, the following resource guide has been created to support our chapters and house corporations in preparing for the 2020-21 academic year.

We acknowledge that information around this virus is constantly changing, which creates the need to remain flexible and adaptable. The information contained in this document is subject to change, and any changes will be communicated to chapter and corporation leadership.

As we make preparations anticipating a return to campus, we must continue to work together to mitigate the spread of this virus. This resource guide gives considerations for the facility and member expectations while living in or visiting the chapter house. It is crucial that we all remember during this time that we must be both responsible for our own health and respectful of the health concerns of others.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

In our planning, we are guided by these principles:

1. Base all decisions on protecting the health and safety of our members, volunteers, employees and guests.
2. Make decisions consistent with our mission as an organization.
3. Sustain the Alpha Chi Omega experience.
4. Provide a quality housed experience through thoughtful preparations based on the benchmarks and guidelines established by federal agencies and trusted partners.

## DETERMINING REOPENING

Alpha Chi Omega is preparing for the anticipated reopening of chapter facilities in the fall. Each chapter and house corporation should consult and review guidance provided by the college/university and local public health officials. If there is conflict between guidelines provided in this resource guide and those being provided by your college/university or local health officials, Alpha Chi Omega recommends the more stringent requirements be followed.

## COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY QUESTIONS

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that chapters and corporations understand the college/university plans, recommendations and guidance for a return to campus and any additional recommendations campus officials are making for the facility. As announcements are made by the college/university, make sure the content is reviewed and discussed between the chapter and corporation in detail. Here are a few questions to consider together:

1. Is there a change to the academic calendar that impacts the facility lease or individual member housing agreements?
2. Are there recommendations that impact facility occupancy, group gatherings, meal service, etc.?

## FULFILLING RESIDENTIAL AGREEMENTS

Alpha Chi Omega understands the seriousness of this virus and encourages all chapters and house corporations to offer flexibility to those members who are at a [higher risk of severe illness](#) from COVID-19. Alpha Chi Omega recommends residential services agreement obligations be reviewed and considered as needed during this time.

## FINANCIAL REVIEW AND CONSIDERATIONS

1. Given available enrollment discussion, Alpha Chi Omega recommends all chapter budgets be adjusted with an assumption of 20% reduction in total membership.
2. Given limited restrictions on facility usage by out-of-house members, the chapter should consider a 25% reduction in dues to support facility operations fees to these members.
3. Alpha Chi Omega recommends chapters and corporations review cleaning and supply budgets, increasing the budget in these areas if needed to make certain adequate funds are available to meet new regulations.
4. Alpha Chi Omega recommends chapters and corporations review other operating expenses to determine if reductions can be made.

5. Chapters and corporations should discuss how these potential changes impact their individual operating budgets and if support is needed through changes to the lease payment.
  - a. While Alpha Chi Omega encourages house corporations to set annual reserve goals for each facility, this year we recognize that some chapters may need support in reductions to their lease payments. Should this be needed, we recommend reducing or eliminating the reserve funds budgeted to help support the chapter in sustaining membership and reducing member fees.
  - b. Continue to hold on 2020-21 capital improvement projects until there is stability with COVID-19.

## **DETERMINING OCCUPANCY**

Chapters and corporations should work together to determine potential changes in occupancy this year. In your discussions and review, consider the following:

1. All college/university and local regulations should be followed.
2. When more than one occupant is in a sleeping room, every effort should be made to ensure beds are at least 6 feet apart.
  - a. Consider relocating desks to other areas of the house if needed to create additional space between beds.
  - b. Special review, attention and consideration should be given to areas used as sleeping porches to limit the amount of people in these spaces as much as possible. For these types of spaces, consider if dayrooms meet fire safety requirements to be used as sleeping rooms.
  - c. When possible due to space restrictions, Alpha Chi Omega recommends sleeping rooms be single or double occupancy.
3. Occupants should be arranged so they are sleeping head to toe in all rooms with more than one occupant.
  - a. Alpha Chi Omega recommends that bunk beds usage be limited.
  - b. Click [here](#) for a resource provided by the Los Angeles Health Department with its recommendations on how to maintain social distancing in sleeping rooms with more than one resident.
4. Corporations should review the ratio of residents to full bathrooms (recommendation of less than 10:1).
5. Consider other areas of the facility that could be used as resident bedrooms for this academic year (guest rooms, study rooms, etc.).
6. If occupancy is determined lower than signed housing agreements, follow the Fraternity resource provided to help determine next steps. Please contact our

collegiate experience staff at [collegiateexperience@alphachiomega.org](mailto:collegiateexperience@alphachiomega.org) for additional support.

## PREPARING THE FACILITY

The environment that is created in a communal living space like our chapter facilities must be thoroughly reviewed through the lens of the current pandemic. Chapters and corporations should review the following information as preparations are made to reopen the facility this fall:

### PREVENTION

1. Alpha Chi Omega recommends COVID-19 prevention supplies such as soap, alcohol-based hand sanitizers containing at least 60% alcohol, tissues and trash baskets be provided in common areas. If not already available in the facility, the chapter and corporation should work together to determine who will provide those items.
2. The corporation should consider posting signage around the facility to assist in continuously educating about COVID-19 symptoms and prevention measures.
3. The corporation should consider posting signage in common areas indicating new maximum occupancy allowed due to social distancing restrictions.
4. Alpha Chi Omega recommends sanitizing stations be provided at the main entrance of the facility so anyone who enters can sanitize their hands immediately. If not already available in the facility, the chapter and corporation should work together to determine who will provide this.

### ORDERING SUPPLIES

1. Alpha Chi Omega recommends that whenever possible our chapters work with a supplier for their needed household items. If the chapter has a kitchen management company or a cleaning service, this is the first group to contact to inquire if the chapter can order supplies through this relationship.
  - a. If you do not know of any suppliers in your area, contact your college/university to see if they can help.
  - b. Make contact as soon as possible to inquire about ordering given the long lead times for obtaining certain items (which can be up to six weeks). We are finding those items to be disposable masks, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes and sprays, individual disposable utensils and reusable containers.
2. Alpha Chi Omega recommends the items with significant lead times be ordered now so they are on-site by the time the facility reopens. The recommendation is to have a three-month supply on hand to get you started. If you need help

determining specific amounts, please contact the NHC staff at [housing@alphachiomega.org](mailto:housing@alphachiomega.org).

- a. For items without a long lead time that the chapter is choosing to wait to order, no matter where you typically source these items, please set a reminder to order those closer to the facility opening so that you have everything you need.
3. Alpha Chi Omega also has an Amazon Business account to which our chapters can be added. This business account allows our chapters access to different supplies that are not always available through personal Amazon accounts. If this is of interest and we have not already added your chapter, please contact the NHC staff at [housing@alphachiomega.org](mailto:housing@alphachiomega.org).

## **PREPARING COMMON AREAS**

The CDC states that limiting face-to-face contact with others is the best way to reduce the spread of COVID-19. [Social distancing](#) means keeping space between yourself and other people by staying at least 6 feet apart, not gathering in groups and staying out of crowded places and mass gatherings.

Common areas are accessible with limited occupancy that allows for social distancing. House corporations should consider furniture rearrangement where appropriate and/or removal of seating to ensure spacing of at least 6 feet. When not feasible, markers should be used to indicate distances of 6 feet.

## **STAIRWELLS**

If possible, Alpha Chi Omega recommends house corporations make stairwells one directional with appropriate signage (exception being evacuation in case of an emergency).

## **ELEVATORS**

If applicable, Alpha Chi Omega recommends elevators be avoided when possible. If needed, limit the capacity per ride to maintain social distancing and post signage indicating new capacity.

## **KITCHENETTE / SISTERS' KITCHEN**

1. Alpha Chi Omega recommends house corporations determine capacity for this space based on social distancing guidelines and post in a visible location.
2. Alpha Chi Omega recommends that use of the stove be scheduled to ensure adequate distance and that the stove be wiped down after personal use.

3. Alpha Chi Omega recommends reusable kitchen items (flatware, dishes, cups) and cleaning supplies be removed and replaced with single-use options as appropriate. Exception is during meal service when employees are ensuring the proper cleaning of these reusable items.
4. Alpha Chi Omega recommends ice machines that are not dispensers be discontinued for member use.

## LAUNDRY ROOMS

House corporations should consider determining capacity for the laundry room and post in a visible location. Alpha Chi Omega recommends use of the washer/dryer be scheduled to ensure adequate distance and that the machines be wiped down after each use.

## RESTROOMS

1. Alpha Chi Omega recommends restrooms be designated and assigned per resident room.
2. Soap and paper towels should be stocked at all times.
3. Signage on proper hand washing should be available in all bathrooms.
4. Where possible, leave main restroom doors open to avoid the need to use door handles to open/close.
5. Because sinks could be an infection source, Alpha Chi Omega recommends middle sinks be blocked from usage or barriers be created between sinks. Residents should avoid placing toothbrushes/toothpaste directly on counter surfaces.

## EXERCISE ROOMS

1. Alpha Chi Omega recommends that exercise rooms in the facility be closed this year.
2. Should the chapter decide to leave them open, Alpha Chi Omega recommends rules be created that:
  - a. Restrict the number of people allowed in at one time to ensure everyone can stay at least 6 feet apart
  - b. Require cleaning by the individual after each use

## REVIEWING SERVICES

### VENDOR PARTNER EXPECTATIONS

House corporations should try, whenever possible, to schedule vendor appointments and inspections during times when the house is not occupied. When not possible, the



following general guidelines should be shared with the vendor partner and are expected to be followed:

1. Vendors should be admitted by appointment only. Try to avoid multiple vendor appointments in the same day.
2. Alpha Chi Omega recommends one point of entry/exit be designated for vendors. If possible, have this be a different entry/exit point than used by the members.
  - a. Incorporate signage at this vendor-specific entrance/exit related to COVID-19 symptoms and asking them not to enter if they are feeling ill.
3. Vendors entering the chapter facility should wear face coverings and gloves.
4. Vendors should limit interaction and practice social distancing.
5. The house director should keep a log of which vendors visited with times and dates. This allows for contact tracing in the case of a diagnosis within either party.

## CLEANING

1. Professional cleaning partners and Pearl Stone Partners employees should follow the [CDC's Guidance on Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities](#), as well as pertinent guidelines from the state and their employer.
2. Enhanced attention will continue to be given to frequently cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surface areas (tables, hard-backed chairs, doorknobs, light switches, phones, tablets, touch screens, remote controls, keyboards, handles, desks, toilets, sinks, etc.).
3. Members are expected to wipe down common area surfaces after individual use.
4. Alpha Chi Omega recommends the chapter review expectations around house chores to make any necessary adjustments. If member chores are still expected, ensure that proper equipment (such as gloves and masks) and sanitizing/cleaning supplies are provided. Discuss member comfort in completing these tasks for their sisters or adjust and discuss individual accountability if chores are suspended.

## PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE/INSPECTIONS

House corporations should make certain HVAC systems have a preventive maintenance plan established with filter changes occurring as recommended by the professional service provider.

House corporations should ensure that all preventive maintenance appointments and routine inspections are complete prior to house opening.

## **FOOD**

Alpha Chi Omega is recommending that facilities that utilize a kitchen management company or employ a Pearl Stone Partners chef be able to continue providing meals to only in-house members in the 2020-21 academic year. Minimum standards applicable in all facilities with food service can be found on pages 12 and 13 of this resource guide. Additional restrictions may apply depending on the college/university, local health department and/or kitchen management provider.

## **WIFI**

Alpha Chi Omega recommends that house corporations review internet capabilities in all facilities to ensure adequate and appropriate coverage for residents given the probable increased demand this year. Should concerns be identified, this information and potential resolutions should be discussed with the chapter. This conversation is required if there is any impact to chapter fees.

## **FACILITY USAGE EXPECTATIONS**

In following the requirements for social distancing and gathering sizes in your area, facility usage and chapter operations may need to be adjusted to accommodate. Please follow university, local and state regulations, as well as Fraternity guidance, when determining options available for your chapter.

## **MEMBER EXPECTATIONS**

### **ALL MEMBERS**

1. All members should educate themselves about COVID-19 symptoms and preventing the spread of COVID-19. The following guidelines should be shared:
  - a. Wash hands often with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.
  - b. Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose and mouth.
  - c. Clean and disinfect high-touch surface areas (tables, hard-backed chairs, doorknobs, light switches, phones, tablets, touch screens, remote controls, keyboards, handles, desks, toilets, sinks, etc.).
  - d. Clean your personal areas and items frequently.
2. All members should sanitize their hands immediately upon entering the facility.
3. All members must sign a wellness agreement, which will be included in this academic year's Annual Obligations.
4. All members should wear a face covering when in shared areas of the facility and maintain social distancing to slow the spread of the virus, until further notice.

5. All members are expected to follow college/university requirements related to student health, safety and organization policy. Examples include but are not limited to: testing, contact tracing, temperature/symptom monitoring and gatherings.

## RESIDENTS

1. Residents should abide by all house rules and restrictions.
2. Residents should plan to bring sanitizing wipes for their personal use within their living space.

## FACE COVERINGS

Recent CDC guidelines recommend that wearing a face mask/covering in public helps protect you and those around you. Unless wearing a mask creates a serious health hazard, all members, employees and vendors to the chapter facility are required to wear a mask. When wearing, please ensure it covers your nose and mouth. The CDC has [additional information](#) available on how to wear and wash your cloth mask.

Below are examples of situations when a mask is required and when a mask is not required. This list is not exhaustive of all scenarios.

Masks are required:

1. When in an indoor space with more than one person
2. When you cannot maintain 6 feet of distance outdoors
3. In a vehicle with two or more people

Masks are not required:

1. When in an enclosed indoor space alone or in your own residence room
2. When outside and more than 6 feet apart

## MOVE-IN PROCEDURES

The move-in process is the responsibility of the chapter officers to execute in conjunction with the advisors, house corporation and house director. While the move-in process will look different this year, it is still important to do everything possible to ensure the safety and comfort of our members.

## PREPARE

1. Set a schedule and time limits for residents to ensure proper social distancing.

2. Have roommates move in at different times and limit one to two residents per corridor or floor at any given time, if possible.
3. Place any forms that residents will need to complete in their rooms with a pen available per resident or in an online platform they can access and submit. If personal information is being collected, provide an envelope so the forms can be enclosed and sealed upon completion.

## **EXECUTE**

1. Limit the number of guests on-site with residents to one whenever possible.
2. Designate entrances and exits to the facility to control traffic flow, and limit the number of bathrooms available during move-in.
3. Clean high-touch areas after each day of move-in. Our recommendation is that the normal cleaning staff/service be utilized for this work, if possible.
4. Ask residents and those assisting them to wear masks based on their ability to properly social distance, current health guidelines and college/university policies.
5. Designate a place where residents should return completed forms.

## **GUEST/VISITOR POLICY**

1. Alpha Chi Omega recommends access to the facility be limited as much as possible this year to members only. Visitors such as advisors, corporation members, vendors, college/university officials or headquarters personnel may also require access at various times.
  - a. As a reminder, common areas are not to be used as sleeping areas.
2. Non-residents may only be in the common areas of the facility on the lower floors. They are not to be permitted in residential areas of the facility.
  - a. Protective face coverings should be worn at all times in common areas of the facility.
  - b. Adjusted capacity of each common area should be followed.
3. Any non-resident, vendor or other visitor who enters the facility should sign in and out at an area designated near the entrance.
4. Any non-resident, vendor or other visitor should not visit the chapter facility if they are feeling ill or are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19.

## **FOOD SERVICE**

Alpha Chi Omega facilities that utilize a kitchen management company or employ a Pearl Stone Partners chef will be able to continue providing meals to in-house members only in the 2020-21 academic year. The following minimum standards apply in all

facilities; additional restrictions may apply depending on the college/university, local health department and/or kitchen management provider.

## **EMPLOYEES**

1. Alpha Chi Omega recommends discontinuing the use of student servers this year.
2. Kitchen management partners and Pearl Stone Partners employees should understand their requirements related to daily self-assessment and/or temperature checks, use of personal protective equipment and reporting exposure.

## **FOOD HANDLING**

1. All dining staff should wear protective face coverings and gloves at all times while working and interacting with members.
2. Buffet-style, self-serve food stations should be discontinued.

## **SOCIAL DISTANCING**

The CDC recommends the following in terms of shared mealtimes/spaces:

1. Arrange seating of chairs and tables to be least 6 feet apart during shared meals.
2. Alter schedules to reduce mixing and close contact, such as staggering meal and activity times and forming small group shifts that regularly participate at the same times and do not mix.

## **QUARANTINE/ISOLATION PROTOCOLS**

### **PREPARE**

It is recommended that Alpha Chi Omega facilities not be used as quarantine or isolation space should a member be diagnosed with COVID-19. Local, state and college/university regulations should be consulted and followed related to next steps in case of an infection.

1. Each chapter should check with its college/university to determine if it will consider the chapter facility a family unit, meaning if someone tests positive, the entire facility will need to quarantine in place.
2. Each chapter should check with its college/university to determine if quarantine/isolation space will be available to chapter residents, which would allow someone who tests positive to vacate the chapter facility and temporarily relocate to campus housing.
  - a. If the college/university is not able to provide temporary housing, each resident should identify a secondary location where she can reside in the event she tests positive for COVID-19.

- b. If a resident needs support in securing a secondary location, the chapter and corporation should work together to find an alternative space.

## RESPOND

If a member is diagnosed with COVID-19, the following [CDC guidelines](#) should be observed:

1. The member who tests positive should alert the college/university health department for support and next steps.
2. Alpha Chi Omega recommends the member who tests positive notify the chapter president.
  - a. The chapter president should contact collegiate experience staff member, Gina Fox at [gfox@alphachiomega.org](mailto:gfox@alphachiomega.org) for additional support and next steps.
3. Cleaning protocols should be enacted:
  - a. Close off areas used by the member. Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area prior to cleaning.
  - b. Clean and disinfect all areas used by the member focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.

Each member should understand she should not return to the facility or end isolation until she has met CDC's [criteria to discontinue home isolation](#).

## COMMUNICATION

As the situation with COVID-19 is everchanging, it is important that all members and volunteers are reviewing the information provided by Alpha Chi Omega Fraternity and National Housing Corporation, the college/university, the local chapter and the local house corporation. All the latest information shared by Alpha Chi Omega can be viewed on our [website](#).

## SUPPORT AND SISTERHOOD

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we acknowledge that students are navigating a unique transition to online education and virtual connections. While balancing these experiences, it is important that members are also taking care of their emotional well-being. Review [resources](#) available for yourself and your chapter that encourage mental wellness during the pandemic.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Updates and recommendations continue to change daily. The following resources are available for additional education and consideration:

- [CDC Guidelines for Colleges, Universities and Higher Learning](#)
- [CDC Guidelines for Shared and Congregate Housing](#)
- [CDC Guidelines for Communities, Schools, Workplaces and Events](#)
- [American College Health Association Guidelines on Reopening Campuses](#)
- [MJ Insurance: COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [CSL Management: Property Management Resources](#)
- [National Panhellenic Conference COVID-19 Resources for Panhellenics](#)