



To: All employees
From: Feridun Hamdullahpur, president and vice-chancellor
Date: Friday, December 4, 2020
Subject: Staying safe over the winter break
Note: This email is for information

As we approach the end of the fall term and begin our preparations for a well-deserved rest over the winter break, I want to share some advice on how to stay safe.

Celebrate with your team

While in-person gatherings are not possible, there are many ways we can safely celebrate together. No matter what celebration your team chooses, we must prioritize one another's safety. All employees are required to follow [government](#), [Region of Waterloo Public Health](#) and [University of Waterloo](#) safety guidelines.

The safest celebrations will be those held virtually. We have shared some virtual holiday activity ideas with managers that give employees the chance to connect and have a little fun. These include ideas like a [trivia](#) contest using [Kahoot](#) or [Mentimeter](#), a [Jeopardy](#) faceoff between teams or inviting team members to donate to the University of Waterloo United Way Campaign or their favourite holiday charity or toy drive.

It's been a tough year, so I really do hope your team finds imaginative ways to reflect on your accomplishments in such difficult circumstances.

Stay safe, no matter where you celebrate

I understand the importance of celebrating the holidays with family and loved ones. This year it is critical to do so safely, even if it means changing the way we celebrate. We must all do our part to stop the spread of COVID-19.

I encourage you to [read the Province's recent holiday guidelines in full](#), but here are some important highlights:

- No matter where you live in the province, the safest way to spend the holidays is by only celebrating in person with the people you live with and celebrating virtually with everyone else. If you live alone, consider exclusively celebrating with one additional household as a safe way to spend the holidays.
- **If you must travel for the holidays, consider a self-quarantine or reducing close contact with others, 10 to 14 days before returning home for the holidays. After the holiday break, you should do the same before coming back to Waterloo.**

- The fewer people you have contact with, the lower the risk of exposure to COVID-19. Virtual gatherings and virtual events are the safest way to visit or celebrate occasions with people outside your household.
- In Red–Control regions, trips outside of the home should only be for essential reasons (e.g. work, school, groceries, pharmacy, health care, assisting vulnerable individuals, or physical activity).
- If you are concerned you were exposed to COVID-19 or have symptoms, take the online [COVID-19 self-assessment](#).
- Get tested if you have [symptoms compatible with COVID-19](#), or if you have been advised of exposure by your local public health unit or through the COVID Alert app.

Help is on hand if you need it

The holiday period can also be a period of great strain for many people for a variety of reasons. Throughout the break, our [Employee and Family Assistance Program](#) is available to anyone who needs it. You can call 1-800-663-1142 to get support at any time. The team at Homewood Health can support you with confidential, short term, counselling services available in person, online, or by telephone. In addition to counselling services, the EFAP will include other tools and resources that contribute to individuals' health and wellbeing.

I know it has been a challenging term, and the holiday break will provide a much-needed pause. But we must not let our guard down. We are all Waterloo Warriors, and we must continue to protect each other, our campus community and our loved ones this holiday season.

Sincerely,

Feridun Hamdullahpur
President and vice-chancellor

Please note: this memo has been published on the new [Employee Communication website](#) for your future reference.