

COVID-19

Reopening Guidance for Businesses



This document includes general recommendations from the Washtenaw County Health Department on reopening and operating businesses or services in consideration of COVID-19 risks. Please consider the following guidelines and checklist items as you prepare to reopen or expand services.

Conduct a [risk assessment](#) for your business

Consider your physical set up, your business needs, your customers and current practices.

- Which workers are [low, medium, and high risk for exposure](#) to COVID-19?
- Which workers are at [greater risk of serious illness](#) from COVID-19?
- Is our business participating in activities that may promote [transmission](#) of COVID-19?
- Does our business have [cleaning procedures](#) as recommended by the CDC?
- Can we quickly communicate with our employees?
- Do we have employees and customers that need [resources in multiple languages](#)?
- Are there locations where employees routinely congregate?
- Do we frequently use tools or equipment shared by employees and/or members of the public?
- Does our customer flow allow for social distancing?
- Are there areas in our business that would not allow customers or staff to distance?

Social distancing

Establish policies and practices for social distancing. Social distancing means avoiding [large gatherings](#), as defined by the CDC, and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet) from others when possible.

- Implement flexible worksites that allow staff to work from home when possible (e.g., telework).
- Schedule teams of employees that alternate between working in the office and at home.
- Implement flexible work hours and shift variations (e.g., staggered shifts).
- Increase physical space between employees at the worksite.
- Increase physical space between employees and customers, especially in waiting rooms (e.g., drive through, partitions).
- Install plastic shields between reception staff and visitors/customers.
- Deliver services remotely (e.g. phone, video, or web).
- Deliver products through curbside pick-up or delivery.
- Limit the number of people in elevators, bathrooms, meeting spaces and other common spaces; consider redesign of office spaces and environment.
- Encourage social distance for customers/public coming into your buildings by using signage, barriers, tape on floor, etc.
- Accept applications and products using drop boxes and other alternative methods.

Take care when attending [meetings and gatherings](#).

- Avoid large gatherings in workspaces, meeting rooms, break rooms, and cafeterias.
- Carefully consider whether travel is necessary (e.g., postpone non-essential meetings or events).
- Consider using videoconferencing or teleconferencing for work-related meetings and gatherings.
- Consider canceling, adjusting, or postponing large work-related meetings or gatherings that can only occur in-person.
- When videoconferencing or teleconferencing is not possible, hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces.

☐ Screening

Follow the [Washtenaw County Health Department](#) guidelines for screening employees.

- Implement employee daily health screening. Employees should [check themselves for symptoms](#) of COVID-19 (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) before arriving to office or starting travel, and notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.
- Use a [screening tool](#) to check employees for symptoms or develop your own method.
- Consider checking staff and visitor temperatures before entering offices, if a touchless thermometer is available.
- Develop a plan to exclude sick employees from work and follow current return to work guidelines. Ensure employees abide by [isolation or quarantine instructions](#).

☐ Personal protective equipment

- Provide masks and/or cloth face shields to employees. Consider distribution of gloves to employees if tasks warrant their use.
- Consider providing cloth/disposable masks to customers/visitors based on supply and risk.
- Determine if your business is required (either by local/state order or internal policy) to have employees wear cloth masks. In Michigan, masks are required to be worn by individuals in enclosed public places if medically tolerated.
- Cloth face masks are meant to protect others from possible exposure by people who may not know they have COVID-19. They reduce respiratory droplet spread and are most effective when they are worn by everyone when in enclosed spaces and people are not able to always be 6 feet away from others, including reception areas and many office environments.
 - Masks should be worn covering the nose and mouth and fit snugly.
 - Cloth masks should contain multiple layers of fabric and should be laundered by the wearer after each day's use.
 - Disposable masks should be thrown away in a trash receptacle.
 - When removing a mask, do not touch the eyes, nose, or mouth.
 - Wash hands after removing mask.
- Train employees on when to use PPE, what PPE is necessary, how to properly don (put on), use, and doff (take off) PPE, and how to properly dispose of PPE.

☐ Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette

Support respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene for employees, customers, and visitors:

- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles.
- Evaluate high touch points and minimize where possible.
- Minimize use of items that staff/visitors need to touch such as debit/credit card machines, brochures, papers, pens, magazines or toys in waiting areas, etc.
- Provide soap and water in the workplace. If soap and water are not readily available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol. If hands are visibly dirty, soap and water should be chosen over hand sanitizer. Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained.
- Place hand sanitizers in multiple locations to encourage hand hygiene.
- Place posters that encourage [hand hygiene](#) to [help stop the spread](#) at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
- Direct employees to visit the [coughing and sneezing etiquette](#) and [clean hands webpage](#) for more information.
- Discourage handshaking – encourage the use of other noncontact methods of greeting.

Cleaning and disinfection

Perform routine environmental cleaning and disinfection.

- Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs.
 - If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent, or soap and water, or other appropriate cleaning product prior to disinfection.
 - For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method, and contact time, etc.).
- Discourage workers from using other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them before and after use.

Perform enhanced cleaning and disinfection after persons suspected/confirmed to have COVID-19 have been in the facility.

- If a sick employee is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, follow the [CDC cleaning and disinfection recommendations](#).

If buildings have been closed, flush the water systems according to CDC guidelines.

- Building flushing: Run water at all points of use, both hot and cold, until all pipes have fresh water. At least 30 minutes at each point is recommended.
- Hot water heaters: Follow manufacturer's instructions on hot water heater maintenance after a period of disuse and ensure water heaters are set to 120 °F or higher.
- Other water collection sites: Before using, clean decorative water features, as well as ice makers, water coolers, and other appliances that store water, with a bleach solution.
- For more guidance, information is available via the [State of Michigan](#) and the [CDC](#).

Ventilation

Consider improving the engineering controls using the building ventilation system.

- Increase ventilation rates.
- Increase the percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system.

Policies

Identify a workplace coordinator who will be responsible for COVID-19 issues and their impact.

- Be familiar with current [business guidelines and requirements](#), including [isolation timeframes for sick employees](#) and [what to do if an employee has COVID-19](#).
- Be familiar with [resources](#) for sick individuals.
- Provide education and training on the COVID-19 virus and PPE requirements.
- Develop communications plans for employee concerns.

Implement flexible sick leave and supportive policies and practices.

- Ensure that sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of and understand these policies.
- Maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member or take care of children due to [school and childcare closures](#). Additional flexibilities might include giving advances on future sick leave and allowing employees to donate sick leave to each other.

- Employers that do not currently offer sick leave to some or all of their employees may want to draft non-punitive “emergency sick leave” policies.
- Employers should not require a positive COVID-19 test result or a healthcare provider’s note for employees who are sick to validate their illness, qualify for sick leave, or to return to work. Healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely manner.
- Review human resources policies to make sure that policies and practices are consistent with public health recommendations and are consistent with existing state and federal workplace laws (for more information on employer responsibilities, visit the [Department of Labor](#) and the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#) websites).
- Connect employees to employee assistance program (EAP) resources (if available) and community resources as needed. Employees may need additional social, behavioral, [mental health](#) or other services.
- Determine how you will operate if absenteeism spikes.
 - Plan to monitor and respond to absenteeism at the workplace.
 - Implement plans to continue your essential business functions in case you experience higher than usual absenteeism.
 - Prepare to institute flexible workplace and leave policies.
 - Cross-train employees to perform essential functions so the workplace can operate even if key employees are absent.

Assess your essential functions and the reliance that others and the community have on your services or products.

- Be prepared to change your business practices if needed to maintain critical operations (e.g., identify alternative suppliers, prioritize existing customers, or temporarily suspend some of your operations if needed). Alternatively, you may need to enhance certain services or functions based on the vulnerable populations you serve.
- Identify alternate supply chains for critical goods and services. Some goods and services may be in higher demand or be unavailable.
- Talk with companies that provide your business with contract or temporary employees about the importance of sick employees staying home and encourage them to develop non-punitive leave policies.
- Talk with business partners about your response plans. Share best practices with other businesses in your communities (especially those in your supply chain), chambers of commerce, and associations to improve community response efforts.

Resources

Plans, guidance, and requirements are being continually developed. For local information, contact the [Washtenaw County Health Department](#) at L-wchdcontact@washtenaw.org or 734-544-6700.

- See the [Michigan COVID-19 Business Response Center](#) for industry-specific plans and guidance.
- For the most up-to-date guidance on COVID-19, visit the following sources of official information:
 - Washtenaw County: washtenaw.org/COVID19
 - Michigan: michigan.gov/coronavirus
 - National: cdc.gov/COVID19