



OPEN FOR BUSINESS

A GUIDE FOR REOPENING YOUR BUSINESS DURING COVID-19

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Regional Chamber

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This guide represents a good faith effort to collect actionable information of use to businesses reopening in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. It draws from reputable national, state and local sources as shown on the sources page at the end of the document.

As all businesses are unique, some or all of the information shown here may not apply in any given instance. As with any evolving situation, recommendations or requirements may continue to change with time. Business owners are encouraged to evaluate their own individual circumstances and seek additional expert counsel as needed to ensure compliance with all appropriate recommendations or requirements.

The Springfield Regional Chamber bears no responsibility for any circumstances arising out of, or related to, the application or non-application of any of the practices or procedures contained in this guide.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Business Community,

After months of closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it's time to prepare for a reopening of our economy. This will be a slow process, marked perhaps by fits and starts, but one day soon we will reopen our doors, get our people back to work, and settle into what I hope will be a safe, happy, and fruitful "new normal."

While the Commonwealth will officially reopen in phases—the movement through which will be determined by health data as opposed to a calendar—the Baker administration has released a mandatory set of workplace safety standards that all businesses will have to follow upon their eventual reopening.

So now is the time. Use this guide to begin thinking about safety. Get a plan in place. Gather the supplies you'll need. The Commonwealth will reopen, it's only a matter of time. Until then, be well and always know that the Springfield Regional Chamber is here to help.

Sincerely,

Nancy Creed
President

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Returning to the workplace during the COVID-19 pandemic requires thoughtful leadership by employers and diligent action by workers, customers and visitors. Developing a thorough plan will help mitigate the risk of COVID-19 exposure as you maintain business operations.

Employers should stay informed of guidance from federal, state and local health agencies, and plan to respond in a flexible way and refine workplace plans as needed. Employers should assess where and how workers might be exposed to COVID-19 and take steps to mitigate the risk.

MANDATORY WORKPLACE SAFETY STANDARDS

Massachusetts has developed Mandatory Workplace Safety Standards which are required of every workplace throughout the Commonwealth as we reopen.

SOCIAL STANDARDS

- All persons, including employees, customers, and vendors should remain at least six feet apart to the greatest extent possible, both inside and outside workplaces
- Establish protocols to ensure that employees can practice adequate social distancing
- Provide signage for safe social distancing
- Require face coverings or masks for all employees

HYGIENE STANDARDS

- Provide hand washing capabilities throughout the workplace
- Ensure frequent hand washing by employees and adequate supplies to do so
- Provide regular sanitization of high touch areas, such as workstations, equipment, screens, doorknobs, restrooms throughout work site

STAFFING AND OPERATIONS STANDARDS

- Provide training for employees regarding the social distancing and hygiene protocols
- Employees who are displaying COVID-19-like symptoms do not report to work
- Establish a plan for employees getting ill from COVID-19 at work, and a return-to work plan

FOR CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

- Establish and maintain cleaning protocols specific to the business
- When an active employee is diagnosed with COVID-19, cleaning and disinfecting must be performed
- Disinfection of all common surfaces must take place at intervals appropriate to said workplace

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

WHEN DEVELOPING YOUR PLAN, YOU SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT:

- Contact among workers, customers, and visitors
- The total number of employees in a facility at any given time to maintain appropriate social distancing
- Leave policies and employee assistance programs
- Identifying essential employees, core functions and operational supports to continue functioning if disruptions occur
- Plan and processes for internal and external emergency communications, including suppliers and customers
- Establishing a workplace coordinator(s) responsible for COVID-19 issues and impacts
- Training and communications on workplace protocols, sanitation measures, employee expectations

FACTORS OF THE PLAN SHOULD:

- Allow employees to return to work in phases
- Allow flexible worksites and flexible work hours, including remote work and staggering shifts when possible, and provide accommodations for vulnerable populations.
- Actively encourage sick employees to stay home
- Ensure that sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance. Ensure employees are aware of and understand these policies and those available through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act
- Whenever possible, 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
- Minimize non-essential travel and adhere to CDC, WHO, federal, state and local guidelines and orders if returning from travel
- Talk with companies that provide your business with contract or temporary employees about the importance of sick employees staying home and understand their policies.
- Provide workers with up-to-date education and training on COVID-19 risk factors and signs and symptoms, proper hygiene strategies, and proper use of PPE
- Develop a plan to mitigate employee concerns and anxiety and connect them with employee assistance program resources and community resources where available

THE PLAN SHOULD PROVIDE FOR IDENTIFICATION AND MITIGATION OF RISK EXPOSURE:

- Prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a critical step in protecting workers, customers, visitors and others at a workplace. Develop policies and procedures for employees to report when they are sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19
- Actively encourage sick employees to stay home, except to seek medical care
- Employees who have symptoms (i.e., fever, cough or shortness of breath) should notify their supervisor and stay home. Employers should encourage employees to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 if they suspect possible exposure
- Sick employees should follow CDC-recommended steps. Employees should not return to work until the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met, in consultation with health care providers and state and local health departments
- Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and follow CDC recommended precautions
- Employers should develop policies and procedures for immediately isolating people who have signs and/or symptoms of COVID-19 and train workers to implement them
- Employees who appear to have symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) upon arrival at work or who become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees, customers, and visitors and sent home and advised to contact their physician
- If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace, but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The employer should instruct fellow employees about how to proceed based on the CDC public health recommendations for community exposure

PREVENTATIVE PRACTICES

For most employers, protecting workers will depend on emphasizing basic infection prevention measures. As appropriate, all employers should implement good hygiene and infection control practices and follow the Mandatory Workplace Safety Standards.

SCREENING EMPLOYEES

- Develop and communicate policies around screening and health checks
- Screen employees for symptoms and to assess the level of potential exposure before returning to work
- Conduct daily temperature and health checks of employees before entering the workplace and screen visitors for fever before entering the workplace. An employee with a temperature above 100.4° F should be sent home immediately and to follow CDC guidelines to determine when it is safe to return to work

PROTECTIVE MEASURES

- Limit or prohibit access of nonemployees into your workplace. If your business requires essential visitors such as deliveries or customers, consider:
 - Designating a specific location for all deliveries and disinfect the area regularly
 - Recording all visitors for potential contact tracing purposes
 - Developing an appointment-only method of visitation
 - Contacting visitors in advance to explain organizational protocols
- Create staggered facility entry and exit procedures to maintain at least six feet of social distancing. Establish a six-foot clearance around lobby and reception locations. Implement social distancing and cleaning protocols for elevator and escalator usage. Consider keeping doors to rooms and offices open to avoid frequent touching of door handles if possible
- Provide markings within the workplace to promote distancing and consider managing foot traffic flow to reduce employee contact in high-traffic areas.
- Clearly post social distancing guidelines
- Limit in-person meetings of any size. Communicate virtually whenever possible
- Alter workspace configurations to increase physical space and accommodate social distancing. Employees closer than six feet together should have a protective barrier separating them, or they should be re-configured to accommodate appropriate spacing
- Adhere to state and local guidance on the requirement of employees and visitors to wear masks or face coverings
- Train workers who need to use protective clothing and equipment how to put it on, use/wear it, and take it off correctly, including in the context of their current and potential duties

- Implement processes for handling mail, files, supplies, etc., to ensure proper sanitation
- Whenever possible, shared office phones should be eliminated. Any phones shared by employees should be thoroughly cleaned after each use
- Close or limit access to common areas. Consider removing furniture in areas where employees are likely to congregate
- Stagger use of all shared spaces, such as bathrooms and kitchens/meal areas

CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

- Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, light switches, drawers, cabinets, handrails and doorknobs, as well as shared equipment, such as printers and copiers
- Provide disposable wipes so that frequently touched surfaces (for example, keyboards and telephones) can be wiped down by employees before each use
- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned with a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection
- For disinfection, follow all CDC guidelines with respect to appropriate solutions and follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.)
- All common areas should be disinfected and cleaned throughout the day by designated employees, particularly frequently touched surfaces, including handles and counter surfaces
- Discourage employees from using other's 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

HYGIENE

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available
- Provide soap and water or hand sanitizer for employees and visitors. Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or use the inside of your elbow
- Place hand sanitizers in multiple locations to encourage hand hygiene
- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles

- Throw used tissues in the trash and immediately wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol
- Place posters that encourage hand hygiene to help stop the spread at the entrance to your workplace and in other high-visibility areas
- Discourage handshaking – encourage the use of other contactless methods of greeting

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

While correctly using PPE can help prevent some exposures, it should not take the place of other prevention strategies. PPE can include gloves, goggles, face shields, face masks and respiratory protection, when appropriate, and recommendations for PPE should be specific to occupations or job tasks. Employers should follow state and local guidance as well as OSHA and CDC recommendations.

PPE SHOULD BE:

- Selected based upon the hazard to the worker
- Properly fitted and periodically refitted, as applicable (e.g., respirators)
- Consistently and properly worn when required
- Regularly inspected, maintained and replaced, as necessary
- Properly removed, cleaned and stored or disposed of, as applicable, to avoid contamination of self, others or the environment

Employers should provide their workers with the necessary PPE needed to keep them safe while performing their jobs.

SOURCES

U.S. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ADMINISTRATION (OSHA)

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC)

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS



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