



# **REOPENING YOUR LAW FIRM**

**TOOLS & RESOURCES**

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# Considerations for Reopening Your Law Firm



*By: The Practice Resource Center Team*

On March 9, 2020, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis declared a state of emergency for the entire state as a result of COVID-19. Since then, we've lived through weeks of quarantine orders, virtual home schooling, remote working, and inexplicable toilet paper shortages. Needless to say, we've all made extraordinary adjustments in adapting to the new stay-at-home normal. Now, almost two months later, the state is preparing to reopen again and everyone is wondering how to begin getting back to the "old normal."

However, if we're being completely honest, for many organizations there is no going back, not completely anyway. Law firms small and large have been forced to temporarily lay off, furlough, or cut pay<sup>[\[1\]](#)</sup>, which may lead to more permanent staffing restructuring in the long term. Some have been forced to focus on upgrading technologies, streamlining workflows, and developing new client-centered practices that allow firms the flexibility to work remotely. Others have adapted so well to remote working that they'll do away with brick-and-mortar office space altogether. Regardless of where your firm falls on the "new normal spectrum," it's important that you plan how to resume operations going forward; here are some important things to consider:

## Safety

The health and safety of your staff should be the first and foremost consideration. The state may be in the process of reopening, however, the virus is still spreading throughout our communities and is expected to continue doing so for some time, albeit at a slower rate if social distancing and contact tracing are successful. The [state of Florida](#), the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#), the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), and [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#) have prepared guidelines for businesses and workplaces, some of which include:

- Before making the call to reopen your firm, review guidance from federal, state, and local government and health agencies. Consider how to incorporate orders, recommendations, and resources into your law firm-specific plans.
- For more information on all current advisories and COVID-19 in Florida, please contact your [county health department](#) or visit the [Florida DOH COVID-19 webpage](#). For questions related to COVID-19 in Florida, the Department of Health created a dedicated COVID-19 Call Center which can be reached at 1-(866) 779-6121. The Call Center is available 24 hours a day. Inquiries may also be emailed to [COVID-19@flhealth.gov](mailto:COVID-19@flhealth.gov).
- Continue allowing (or encouraging) flexible worksites and remote services for roles that are conducive to teleworking, especially for employees who are just as efficient and productive working from home as in the workplace.
- For lawyers and staff that cannot telework, establish alternating days or extra shifts that reduce the total number of employees at the firm at a given time while still allowing for employees to complete a full workweek.
- Develop a plan for employees to return to work in phases.
- Increase physical space between employees and others at the firm (6 ft), especially if social distancing is recommended by state and local authorities. If this is not possible, require employees and others to wear masks or other face coverings.
- Limit face-to-face meetings at the firm. Use videoconferencing or teleconferencing when possible. For larger events, follow [CDC guidance for events and mass gatherings](#).
- Restrict access to common areas.
- Discontinue nonessential travel. Adhere to [CDC guidelines](#) regarding isolation following travel.
- Develop, implement, and train employees on policies and procedures that address personal hygiene expectations for [coughing, sneezing](#) and [handwashing](#). Provide tissues, no-touch trash cans, soap and water, and hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Keep the firm clean and hygienic by routinely cleaning and disinfecting all frequently touched surfaces, such as workstations, countertops, handrails, and doorknobs. Discourage sharing of tools and equipment, if feasible. To disinfect, use [products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2](#), the cause of COVID-19, and are appropriate for the surface.
- Screen employees and others before entering the premises for symptoms of COVID-19 or influenza like illness.
- Remind employees to stay home if they are sick, even if they have only mild symptoms of COVID-19 or influenza like illness.

## Leave Policies

- 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.
- If your firm does not currently offer sick leave to some or all of its employees, you may want to draft non-punitive “emergency sick leave” policies.
- Don’t 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's](#) and the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's](#) websites).
- Connect employees to employee assistance program (EAP) resources (if available) and community resources as needed. Employees may need additional social, behavioral, and other services, for example, to cope with the death of a loved one.
- **Florida Lawyers Helpline**, 1-833-FL1-WELL, is a free and confidential service that connects members with a professional counselor. There's no cost for calls to the hotline and you may be referred for up to three free telehealth counseling sessions per year to help you develop strategies to overcome life's challenges, balance priorities, and better handle both personal and professional pressures.

## Legal Liability

While Florida Bar staff cannot provide legal advice, we'd be remiss not to include this as a topic for consideration. What will you do if a client or other party claims to have been infected while on law firm premises or due to contact with lawyers or staff? What if an employee is infected while at work? You need to consider potential claims that may arise, especially if you've disregarded federal and state guidelines which may have prevented employees or others from getting sick.

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Bloomberg Law Practical Guidance: Coronavirus Toolkit](#) (FREE)
- [Lexis Practice Advisor® Coronavirus Resource Kit](#) (FREE)
- [Thomson Reuters Practical Law Global Coronavirus Toolkit](#) (FREE)
- [Fastcase COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [Florida Bar COVID-19 Information & Resources](#)
- [Florida Bar Mental Health and Wellness Center](#)
- [Supreme Court of Florida COVID-19 Workgroup](#)
- [U.S. Department of Labor Coronavirus Resources](#)

## ARTICLES:

- TFB News: [Thinking about going back to the office? Check out SHRM's COVID-19 back-to-work checklist](#)
- [Clio's COVID-19 Impact Research Briefing: May 4](#)
- National Law Review: [Legal Considerations for Reopening Business in the Time of Coronavirus](#)
- Law.com | DBR: [Despite Reopenings, Florida Firms Aren't Rushing Back to the Office](#)
- Law.com: [As States Move to Reopen, Law Firms Exercise Caution](#)
- Inc.com: [What Not to Do When You Reopen Your Business](#)

<sup>[1]</sup> See *ABA Journal* Layoffs topic articles available at: <https://www.abajournal.com/topic/layoffs>

[See Gov. DeSantis' Plan for Florida's Recovery](#)

Safe. Smart. Step-by-Step.

# Plan for Florida's Recovery

Phase 1 of the [Plan for Florida's Recovery](#) took effect May 4, 2020 and was updated effective May 11, 14 and 15, 2020.

Phase 2 of the [Plan for Florida's Recovery](#) will take effect June 5, 2020 for all Florida counties except Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach.

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## Businesses and Employers

See the latest info for **reopening businesses** in the [Plan for Florida's Recovery](#). Helpful tools and checklists for deciding when and how to resume operations are available from the [CDC](#) and [FEMA](#).

See the [Governor's Actions and Emergency Orders](#) for the latest guidance for businesses in Florida.

If **your business** has been negatively impacted as a result of the mitigation efforts in Florida to stop the spread of COVID-19, you may be eligible for **assistance for Florida businesses**. [See more information](#).

If **your employment** has been negatively impacted as a result of the mitigation efforts in Florida to stop the spread of COVID-19, you may be eligible to receive **Reemployment Assistance**. [See more information](#).

## Preparing Workplaces for a COVID-19 Outbreak

Businesses and employers can prevent and slow the spread of COVID-19 within the workplace. As an employer, if your business operations were interrupted, resuming normal or phased activities presents an opportunity to update your COVID-19 preparedness, response, and control plans. All employers should implement and update as necessary a plan that:

- is specific to your workplace,
- identifies all areas and job tasks with potential exposures to COVID-19, and
- includes control measures to eliminate or reduce such exposures.

Talk with your employees about planned changes and seek their input. Additionally, collaborate with employees and employee organizations to effectively communicate important COVID-19 information.

See the [OSHA COVID-19 guidance](#) for more information on how to protect workers from potential exposures, according to their exposure risk. Plans should consider that employees may be able to spread COVID-19 even if they do not show symptoms.

All employers need to consider how best to decrease the spread of COVID-19 and lower the impact in your workplace. This should include activities to:

- prevent and reduce transmission among employees,
- maintain healthy business operations, and
- maintain a healthy work environment.

**See more information for [businesses and employers resuming normal or phased operations](#) to prevent and reduce transmission among employees, maintain healthy business operations, and maintain a healthy work environment, including specific information for restaurants, bars and small businesses.**

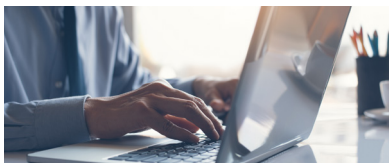
## Resources

[Guidance for Building Water Systems](#) – CDC website This resource provides important information that will assist building owners and prevent the potential for Legionnaires' disease upon facility reopening.

[Planning Considerations for Organizations in Reconstituting Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) – FEMA website

See more information for [businesses and employers to plan and respond to COVID-19](#). – CDC Website

# WORKPLACES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



The purpose of this tool is to assist employers in making (re)opening decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially to protect vulnerable workers. It is important to check with state and local health officials and other partners to determine the most appropriate actions while adjusting to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local community.

## Should you consider opening?

- ✓ Will reopening be consistent with applicable state and local orders?
- ✓ Are you ready to protect employees at [higher risk](#) for severe illness?

**ALL YES**



## Are recommended health and safety actions in place?

- ✓ Promote [healthy hygiene practices](#) such as [hand washing](#) and [employees wearing a cloth face covering](#), as feasible
- ✓ Intensify [cleaning, disinfection](#), and ventilation
- ✓ Encourage [social distancing](#) and enhance spacing between employees, including through physical barriers, changing layout of workspaces, encouraging telework, closing or limiting access to communal spaces, staggering shifts and breaks, and limiting large events, when and where feasible
- ✓ Consider modifying travel and commuting practices. Promote telework for employees who do not live in the local area, if feasible.
- ✓ Train all employees on health and safety protocols

**ALL YES**



## Is ongoing monitoring in place?

- ✓ Develop and implement procedures to check for [signs and symptoms](#) of employees daily upon arrival, as feasible
- ✓ Encourage anyone who is sick to [stay home](#)
- ✓ Plan for if an employee gets sick
- ✓ Regularly communicate and monitor developments with local authorities and employees
- ✓ Monitor employee absences and have flexible leave policies and practices
- ✓ Be ready to consult with the local health authorities if there are cases in the facility or an increase in cases in the local area

**ALL YES**



**OPEN AND MONITOR**

**ANY NO**



**DO NOT OPEN**

**ANY NO**



**MEET SAFEGUARDS FIRST**

**ANY NO**



**MEET SAFEGUARDS FIRST**





# Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)






## COVID-19 Employer Information for Office Buildings

Workers in office buildings may be at risk for exposure to the virus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Office building employers, building owners and managers, and building operations specialists can take steps to create a safe and healthy workplace and protect workers and clients.

### Create a [COVID-19 workplace health and safety plan](#).


- Start by reviewing the [CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#). This will provide guidelines and recommendations that all employers can use to protect their workers and clients.

### Before resuming business operations, check the building to see if it's ready for occupancy.

- Ensure that ventilation systems in your facility operate properly. For building heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC systems) that have been shut down or on setback, review new construction start-up guidance provided in [ASHRAE Standard 180-2018, Standard Practice for the Inspection and Maintenance of Commercial Building HVAC Systems](#)  .
- Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, and other methods. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk for current or subsequent occupants, including children (e.g., allowing outdoor environmental contaminants including carbon monoxide, molds, or pollens into the building).
- Evaluate the building and its mechanical and life safety systems to determine if the building is ready for occupancy. Check for hazards associated with prolonged facility shutdown such as [mold growth](#) , [rodents or pests](#)  , or [issues with stagnant water systems](#), and take appropriate remedial actions.

### Identify where and how workers might be exposed to COVID-19 at work.








Employers are responsible for providing a [safe and healthy workplace](#) .

- Conduct a thorough [hazard assessment](#)  of the workplace to identify potential workplace hazards that could increase risks for COVID-19 transmission.
- Identify work and common areas where employees could have close contact (within 6 feet) with others — for example meeting rooms, break rooms, the cafeteria, locker rooms, check-in areas, waiting areas, and routes of entry and exit.
- Include all employees in the workplace in communication plans — for example management, staff, utility employees, relief employees, janitorial staff, maintenance staff, and supervisory staff.
- If contractors are employed in the workplace, develop plans to communicate with the contracting company regarding modifications to work processes and requirements for the contractors to prevent transmission of COVID-19.

### Develop hazard controls using [the hierarchy of controls](#) to reduce transmission among workers. Include a combination of controls noted below.

#### Engineering controls: Isolate workers from the hazard

- [Modify or adjust seats, furniture, and workstations](#)   to maintain social distancing of 6 feet between employees.

- Install transparent shields or other physical barriers where possible to separate employees and visitors where social distancing is not an option.
- Arrange reception or other communal seating area chairs by turning, draping (covering chair with tape or fabric so seats cannot be used), spacing, or removing chairs to maintain social distancing.
- Use methods to physically separate employees in all areas of the facilities including work areas and other areas such as meeting rooms, break rooms, parking lots, entrance and exit areas, and locker rooms.
  - Use signs, tape marks, or other visual cues such as decals or colored tape on the floor, placed 6 feet apart, to indicate where to stand when physical barriers are not possible.
  - Replace high-touch communal items, such as coffee pots, water coolers, and bulk snacks, with alternatives such as pre-packaged, single-serving items.
- Take steps to improve ventilation in the building:
  - Increase the percentage of outdoor air (e.g., using economizer modes of HVAC operations) potentially as high as 100% (first verify compatibility with HVAC system capabilities for both temperature and humidity control as well as compatibility with outdoor/indoor air quality considerations).
  - Increase total airflow supply to occupied spaces, if possible.
  - Disable demand-control ventilation (DCV) controls that reduce air supply based on temperature or occupancy.
  - Consider using natural ventilation (i.e., opening windows if possible and safe to do so) to increase outdoor air dilution of indoor air when environmental conditions and building requirements allow.
  - Improve central air filtration:
    - [Increase air filtration](#)  to as high as possible (MERV 13 or 14) without significantly diminishing design airflow.
    - Inspect filter housing and racks to ensure appropriate filter fit and check for ways to minimize filter bypass
  - Consider running the building ventilation system even during unoccupied times to maximize dilution ventilation.
  - [Generate clean-to-less-clean air movement](#)   by re-evaluating the positioning of supply and exhaust air diffusers and/or dampers and adjusting zone supply and exhaust flow rates to establish measurable pressure differentials. Have staff work in areas served by “clean” ventilation zones that do not include higher-risk areas such as visitor reception or exercise facilities (if open).
- Consider using portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) fan/filtration systems to help [enhance air cleaning](#)   (especially in higher risk areas).
- Ensure exhaust fans in restroom facilities are functional and operating at full capacity when the building is occupied.
- Consider using [ultraviolet germicidal irradiation \(UVGI\)](#)   as a supplement to help inactivate the virus.

## Administrative controls: Change the way people work

- Actively encourage employees who have [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 or who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 to notify their supervisor and stay home.
  - Employees who appear to have [symptoms](#) upon arrival at work or who become sick during the day should immediately be separated from others, provided a face mask if they are not using one, and sent home with instructions and guidance on how to follow-up with their health care professional.
  - 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 their healthcare provider.
  - Perform enhanced [cleaning and disinfection](#) after anyone suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 has been in the workplace.
- Consider conducting daily in-person or virtual health checks (e.g., symptoms and/or temperature screening) of employees before they enter the work site.
  - See [CDC’s COVID-19 General Business FAQs](#) for guidance on how to safely conduct employee screening.
  - Develop and implement a policy to prevent employees from congregating in groups while waiting for screening, and maintain a 6-foot separation between employees.

- Stagger shifts, start times, and break times as feasible to reduce the density of employees in common areas such as screening areas, break rooms, and locker rooms.
- Consider posting signs in parking areas and entrances that ask guests and visitors to phone from their cars to inform the administration or security when they reach the facility.
  - Provide directions for visitors to enter the building at staggered times.
- Consider posting signs in parking areas and entrances that ask guests and visitors to wear cloth face coverings if possible, to not enter the building if they are sick, and to stay 6 feet away from employees, if possible.
- **Clean and disinfect** high-touch surfaces
  - Follow the [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting](#) to develop, follow, and maintain a plan to perform regular cleanings to reduce the risk of people's exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19 on surfaces.
  - Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, printer/copiers, drinking fountains, and doorknobs.
    - If hard surfaces are visibly soiled (dirty), clean them using a detergent or soap and water before you disinfect them.
    - For disinfection, most common, EPA-registered, household disinfectants should be effective as well as [diluted household bleach solutions](#) or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol. A list of [products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19](#) [↗](#) is available on the EPA website. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method, and contact time).
  - Provide employees with disposable wipes and other cleaning materials so that they can properly wipe down frequently touched surfaces before each use.
- Provide employees adequate time to wash their hands and access to soap, clean water, and single use paper towels.
  - Remind employees to [wash their hands](#) often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, they should use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Establish policies and practices for social distancing:
  - Remind employees that people may be able to spread COVID-19 even if they do not show symptoms. Consider all close interactions (within 6 feet) with employees, clients, and others as a potential source of exposure.
  - Prohibit handshaking, hugs, and fist bumps.
  - Limit use and occupancy of elevators to maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet.
  - Encourage the use of outdoor seating areas and social distancing for any small group activities such as lunches, breaks, and meetings.
- For employees who commute to work using public transportation or ride sharing, consider offering the following support:
  - If feasible, offer employees incentives to use forms of transportation that minimize close contact with others (e.g., biking, walking, driving or riding by car either alone or with household members).
  - Ask employees to follow the CDC guidance on how to [protect yourself when using transportation](#).
  - Allow employees to shift their hours so they can commute during less busy times.
  - Ask employees to [wash their hands](#) as soon as possible after their trip.
- **Post signs and reminders** at entrances and in strategic places providing instruction on [hand hygiene](#), [COVID-19 symptoms](#), and [cough and sneeze etiquette](#). This should include signs for non-English speakers, as needed.
- Use no-touch waste receptacles when possible.
- Remind employees to avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Employees should wear [a cloth face covering](#) to cover their nose and mouth in all areas of the business.
- CDC recommends wearing a cloth face covering as a measure to contain the wearer's respiratory droplets and help protect their co-workers and members of the general public. Employees should not wear cloth face coverings at work if they have trouble breathing, any inability to tolerate wearing it, or if they are unable to remove it without assistance.
  - Cloth face coverings are not considered personal protective equipment. They may prevent workers, including those who don't know they have the virus, from spreading it to others but may not protect the wearers from exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19.
  - Remind employees and clients that CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, **especially** in areas of significant community-based transmission. Wearing a cloth face covering, however, does not replace the need to practice social distancing.

## Educate employees and supervisors about steps they can take to protect themselves at work.








- Communication and training should be easy to understand, be in preferred languages spoken or read by the employees, and include accurate and timely information. Topics should include signs and symptoms of infection, staying home when ill, social distancing, personal protective equipment, hand hygiene practices, and identifying and minimizing potential routes of transmission at work, at home, and in the community. Other topics may be considered based on local context and need.
- CDC has free, simple [posters available](#) to download and print, some of which are translated into different languages.
- Provide information and training on what actions employees should take when they are not feeling well (e.g., workplace leave policies, local and state health department information).

## Take actions to maintain a healthy work environment for your employees and clients.

Read the [CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#) to learn about more recommendations for creating new sick leave policies, cleaning, and employee communication policies to help protect your workers and clients.

## Where can I get more information?

You, as the employer, are responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns and informing employees of the hazards in your workplace. You can use these additional sources for more information on reducing the risk of exposures to COVID-19 at work:

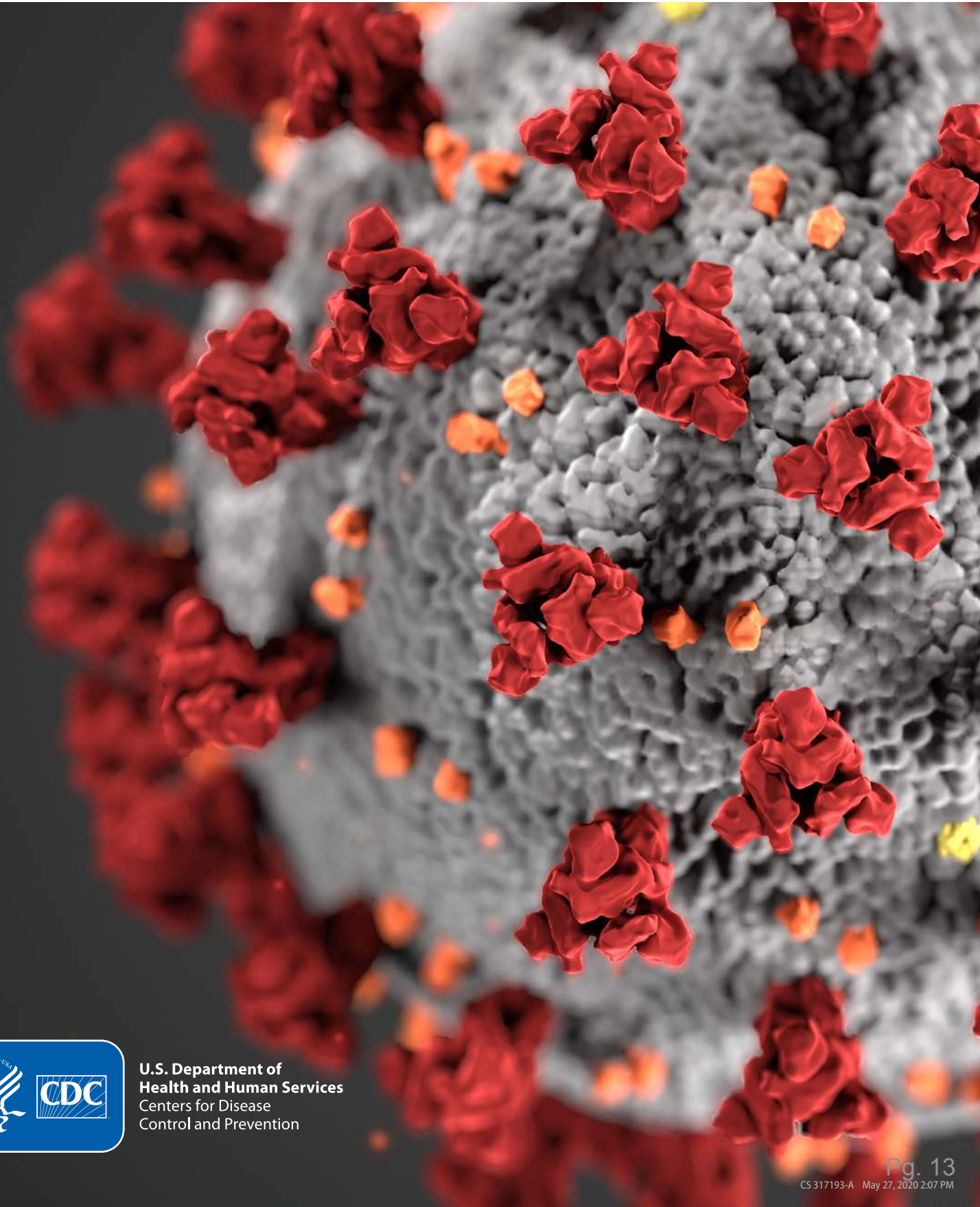
- [CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [CDC General Business Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [NIOSH COVID-19 Workplace Safety and Health Topic](#)
- [CDC COVID-19](#)
- [OSHA COVID-19](#) 
- [OSHA Guidelines on Preparing Workplaces for COVID](#)  
- [AIHA Reopening: Guidance for General Office Settings](#)  
- [Building Owners & Managers Association International \(BOMA\): Getting Back to Work: Preparing Buildings for Re-Entry Amid COVID-19](#)  
- CDCINFO: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) | TTY: 1-888-232-6348 | website: [cdc.gov/info](https://cdc.gov/info)

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# Resuming Business TOOLKIT

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)



**U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services**  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention



SCAN HERE FOR MORE  
INFORMATION



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The **Resuming Business Toolkit** is designed to assist employers in slowing the spread of COVID-19 [1] and lowering the impact in their workplace when reintegrating employees into non-healthcare business settings. Not sure whether you're ready to resume business? Use CDC's decision tools [2-3] as a start.

## This toolkit includes the following materials:



**Employer Sheet** to introduce employers to the contents of the toolkit and how to use the materials in non-healthcare workplaces



**Restart Readiness Checklist** to help make returning to work and resuming business operations as safe and healthy as possible for employers, employees, and the public



**Worker Protection Tool** for employers to identify protective measures for workers when interacting with each other and the public



**Returning to Work Infographic** to remind employees how to protect themselves and others from COVID-19 and address their potential concerns about returning to the workplace



**Resources** to easily access additional information using hyperlinks, URLs, and QR codes





## Employer Sheet

### Resuming Business Toolkit for Coronavirus Disease

The information in this toolkit is based on **CDC's Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)** [4]. Be sure to thoroughly review this guidance for complete information.

Before resuming your non-healthcare business operations, it is important to consider how much the disease is spreading in your community and the readiness of workplace management to protect the safety and health of employees and the public. CDC's decision tools [2-3] can help with determine if it is time.

For information about conditions in your community, contact your local health department [5].

This toolkit provides a **checklist** to prepare the workplace for operations and a **tool** to navigate protective options for workers. Revisit materials regularly as the COVID-19 situation can change in your community.

- 1. Get started with the Restart Readiness Checklist**, working with others in management to identify which checklist items apply to your business. Revisit the list as you make progress on items and as conditions in your area change.
- 2. Select protective measures in the Worker Protection Tool**, based on the nature of your employees' interactions with other workers and/or the public. Consider whether multiple categories apply to your business, then work through those items.
- 3. Share the Returning to Work Infographic with employees.** Depending on your business, consider the following ways of incorporating the infographic into the workplace:
  - ✓ Print and post in common areas such as break rooms, hallways, elevators, or bathrooms.
  - ✓ Email to employees, encouraging them to print a copy and place it where they will see it often in their office or workspace.
  - ✓ Read content during team meetings, reminding employees to reach out with any questions.



# Restart Readiness Checklist

## For Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Use this checklist (for non-healthcare employers) as a guide to resuming business operations as safely and healthy as possible for you, your employees, and the public. Some items may need to be ongoing, so regularly revisit the checklist while COVID-19 cases exist. Only complete those items that apply to your business. See the Resources section for links and QR codes to web resources.

## 1. Prevent and reduce transmission among employees

### *Monitor federal, state, and local public health communications about COVID-19.*

Item	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable
Ensure workers have access to current information.				
Check local public health information [5] and the CDC COVID-19 website [1] daily, or as needed depending on local conditions.				

### *Reinforce how employees can protect themselves and others from COVID-19 by communicating the following:*

Item	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable
If you have symptoms [6], notify your supervisor and stay home.				
If you are sick, follow CDC-recommended steps [7], and do not return to work until you meet criteria to discontinue home isolation [8].				
If you are well, but have someone in your household who has COVID-19, notify your supervisor and follow CDC recommended precautions [9].				
Wash hands [10] often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.				
Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.				
Cover mouth and nose with a tissue or inside of the elbow when coughing or sneezing, immediately throw tissue in trash, then wash hands.				

Item	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable
Develop a cleaning and disinfecting plan [11]				
Clean and disinfect [12] frequently touched objects and surfaces at the beginning and end of each shift.				
Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment. Clean and disinfect between employees if sharing occurs.				
Avoid large gatherings, [13] and stay at least 6 feet from others when possible.				
Use cloth face coverings (if appropriate) [14] when social distancing is not possible, and especially in areas of with high levels of cases.				

***Plan for conducting daily in-person or virtual health checks [15] (e.g., symptom and/or temperature screening) before employees enter the facility:***

Item	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable
Use social distancing (about 6 feet distance), barriers or partitions, and/or personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect screeners.				
If taking temperatures, use touchless thermometers.				
Consider providing multiple screening entries.				
Consider designating doorways as "entry only" or "exit only."				
Make employee health screenings as private as possible.				
Do not determine risk based on race or country of origin; be sure to maintain confidentiality of each individual's medical status and history [16].				

### *Conduct a hazard assessment of the workplace.*

Item	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable
Identify potential hazards that might expose workers to COVID-19.				
Use the Worker Protection Tool to identify appropriate engineering, administrative, and personal protective equipment (PPE) options for your workplace.				

### *Plan for what to do if an employee is sick at work.*

Item	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable
Immediately separate employees who appear to have symptoms [6] from others in the workplace.				
Have a procedure for safe transport of a sick employee to home or a healthcare facility.				

### *Develop an action plan for suspected/confirmed cases.*

Item	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable
<b>If it has been fewer than 7 days</b> since the sick employee has been in the facility:				
Close off areas that have been used by the sick person for long periods of time (e.g., their desk or workstation).				
Wait 24 hours (or as long as possible), then clean and disinfect [12] the area.				
Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation during the waiting period.				
<b>If it has been 7 days or more</b> since the sick employee used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection beyond routine efforts is not necessary.				

*Continued*

Item	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable
Determine which employees may have been exposed to the virus and may need to take additional precautions.				
Inform employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace, but maintain confidentiality [17].				
Most workplaces can follow the Public Health Recommendations for Community-Related Exposure [18].				
Critical infrastructure [19] workplaces can follow appropriate safety practices [20].				

## 2. Maintain healthy business operations

### *Establish a COVID-19 coordinator.*

Item	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable
Identify a coordinator who will be responsible for COVID-19 issues and their impact at the workplace.				
Inform employees who this person is and how to communicate with that person.				

### *Implement sick leave policies and practices that are flexible and supportive.*

Item	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable
Ensure sick leave policies and practices are consistent with public health guidance, follow state and federal workplace laws and policies, and are shared with employees.				
Allow employees to stay home, without penalty, to care for a sick family member or take care of children due to closures.				
If you do not offer sick leave, consider implementing non-punishing "emergency sick leave" policies.				
Do not require a 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.				

### *Protect higher risk employees [21].*

Item	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable
Support and encourage telework, if available.				
Consider offering vulnerable workers [22] duties that minimize their contact with customers and other employees (e.g., restocking shelves).				

### *Communicate supportive workplace policies. You may need to communicate with non-English speakers in their preferred languages.*

Item	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable
Train workers on how new policies to reduce the spread of COVID-19 may affect existing health and safety practices.				
Communicate to contractors or on-site visitors about changes to help control the spread of COVID-19.				
Create and test communication systems that employees can use to self-report if they are sick that you can also use to notify employees of exposures and closures.				

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

Item	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable
Prepare to change your business practices, if needed, to maintain critical operations.				
Identify alternate supply chains for critical goods/services.				
When resuming onsite business operations, prioritize job functions for continuous operations. Resume business operations in phases.				

### *Plan for employee absenteeism spikes.*

Item	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable
Monitor absenteeism at work.				
Implement plans to continue essential business functions.				
Cross-train employees to perform essential functions.				

### *Establish social distancing [23] policies and practices.*

Item	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable
Implement flexible worksites, work hours, and meeting and travel options.				
Modify the workplace to increase physical space between employees, and between employees and customers, to 6 feet or more, where feasible.				
Use signs, tape marks, or other visual cues to indicate where to stand when physical barriers are not possible.				
Have employees and customers wear cloth face coverings (if appropriate) [14] when physical barriers or social distancing is not possible.				
Discourage handshaking or other close contact.				
Deliver services remotely.				
Move the electronic payment terminal/credit card reader farther away from the cashier, if possible.				
Shift primary stocking activities to off-peak or after hours, when possible.				

*Delegate authority to local managers of your business locations.*

Item	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable
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Take appropriate actions outlined in their COVID-19 response plans based on their local conditions.

### 3. Maintain a healthy work environment

*Implement controls according to the hierarchy of controls [24] to protect employees and the public.*

Item	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable
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Use the Worker Protection Tool to identify appropriate engineering, administrative, and personal protective equipment (PPE) options for your workplace.

*Modify ventilation systems [25]*

Item	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable
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Work with building maintenance staff to determine if the ventilation system can be modified to increase ventilation rates or the percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system.

Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and provide acceptable indoor air quality.

Disable demand-controlled ventilation (DCV).

Further open minimum outdoor air dampers (as high as 100%) to reduce or eliminate recirculation.

Improve central air filtration to MERV-13, or the highest compatible with the filter rack, and seal edges of the filter to limit bypass.

*Ensure the safety of the water system of your building after a prolonged shutdown.*

Item	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable
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Follow the CDC Guidance for Building Water Systems [26].



### *Supply employees, customers, and visitors with what they need to clean hands and cover coughs and sneezes.*

Item	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable
Provide tissues, no-touch trash cans, and touchless hand sanitizer stations.				
Provide soap and water. If soap and water are not readily available, provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol.				
Direct employees to visit CDC's coughing and sneezing etiquette [27] and clean hands webpage [28].				
Place posters that encourage cough/sneeze etiquette and hand hygiene [29-30] at the entrance to and throughout your workplace (e.g., bathrooms and kitchens). Include signs for non-English speakers, as needed.				

### *Perform routine cleaning and disinfecting.*

Item	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable
Follow CDC's Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting [11] to develop, implement, and maintain a plan.				
Clean all frequently touched surfaces at the beginning and end of each shift, at minimum.				
Clean dirty surfaces using a detergent or soap and water before you disinfect them.				
Disinfect using EPA-registered disinfectant that is effective against SARS-CoV-2 [31].				
Provide disposable disinfecting wipes so employees can wipe down commonly used surfaces before each use.				
Store and use disinfectants in a responsible and appropriate manner according to the label.				
Do not mix cleaning and disinfection products together.				
Advise employees to always wear gloves and other PPE appropriate for the chemicals being used.				

***Limit travel** and advise employees who must travel to take additional precautions and preparations.*

Item	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable
Minimize non-essential travel.				
Check the CDC's Traveler's Health Notices [32].				
Advise employees to check for symptoms of COVID-19 [6] before travel.				
Ensure employees who become sick while traveling or on temporary assignment know what to do.				
Call a healthcare provider for advice, if needed.				
Notify their supervisor.				
Follow company policy for obtaining medical care when traveling outside the United States				

***Plan meetings and gatherings [13] to lower risk.***

Item	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable
Use videoconferencing or teleconferencing, when possible.				
Cancel, adjust, or postpone large work-related meetings or gatherings.				
If videoconferencing or teleconferencing is not possible:				
Hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces.				
Continue to maintain 6 feet between people.				
Wear cloth face coverings (if appropriate) [14].				



# Worker Protection Tool

## For Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Consider the exposure that your workers will have to potential sources of COVID-19 when you resume business operations. Use this tool to identify protective measures for interactions between workers and/or the public; revisit the tool on an ongoing basis while COVID-19 cases exist. Only complete items that apply to your business. See appendix for web resources.

## Worker Protections

### Engineering

Facilities and Equipment	Completed	N/A
Assess job hazards for potential benefit of engineering protections.		
Ensure ventilation and water systems operate properly.		
Alter the workspace to maintain social distancing [23]. Examples include:		
Arrange partitions as a barrier shield.		
Move electronic payment reader away from cashier.		
Use verbal announcements, signs, and visual cues to promote social distancing.		
Remove/rearrange furniture.		
Provide remote shopping alternatives (e.g., delivery, pick-up).		

### Administrative—three categories

Management and Communications	Completed	N/A
Monitor state and local public health communications about COVID-19.		
Encourage sick workers to report symptoms, stay home, and follow CDC guidance.		
Consider conducting daily in-person or virtual health checks [15] (e.g., symptom and/or temperature screening) before employees enter the facility:		
Develop strategies to communicate with workers and manage concerns.		
Remind workers of available support services.		
Communicate to partners, suppliers, and contractors on policies and practices.		
Encourage social distancing and use of cloth face coverings (if appropriate) [14] for both employees and customers.		
Use technology to promote social distancing (e.g., telework, virtual meetings).		
Cancel group events.		

Continued

<b>Management and Communications</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Close/limit use of shared spaces.		
Ask sick customers to stay home; post signs asking them not to enter if they are sick.		
Consider policies that encourage flexible sick leave and alternative work schedules.		
Schedule stocking during off-peak hours.		
<b>Cleaning and Disinfection</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Develop a plan for cleaning and disinfecting [11].		
Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (e.g., counters, shelving, displays).		
Provide employees with disposable disinfectant wipes, cleaner, or sprays that are effective against the virus that causes COVID-19.		
<b>Training</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Provide training on:		
Policies to reduce the spread of COVID-19		
General hygiene		
Symptoms, what to do if sick		
Cleaning and disinfection		
Cloth face covers		
Social distancing		
Use of PPE		
Safe work practices		
Stress management		
<b><i>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</i></b>		
<b>PPE</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Conduct a workplace hazard assessment.		
Determine needed PPE for workers' job duties based on hazards and existing protections.		
Select and provide appropriate PPE to workers at no cost.		



# Keep yourself and others safe from COVID-19 when returning to work

## Clean your hands often



- ✓ **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, and after using others' or shared equipment.
- ✓ If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**.
- ✓ **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.

## Avoid close contact



- ✓ Put **distance (at least 6 feet)** between yourself and other people.
- ✓ Wear **cloth face coverings** (if appropriate) when social distancing is difficult to maintain.
- ✓ Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices, or other **work tools and equipment**, when possible. **Clean and disinfect** between employees if sharing occurs.
- ✓ Remember that some **people without symptoms** may be able to spread virus.

## If you are at increased risk for severe illness...



- ✓ Contact management to **request special accommodations** that will allow you to perform your job duties safely.



Protect yourself and others from COVID-19 by taking everyday preventive actions.



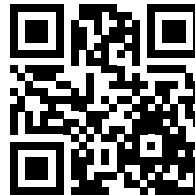
[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)



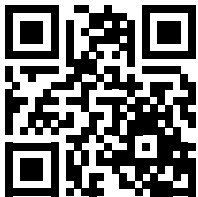
## Resources referred to throughout the Toolkit



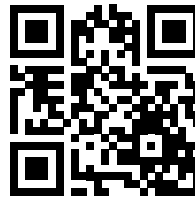
1. [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](https://go.usa.gov/xvHEE)  
[go.usa.gov/xvHEE](https://go.usa.gov/xvHEE)



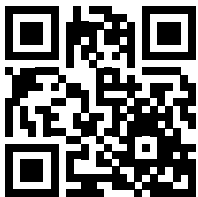
6. [Symptoms of Coronavirus](https://go.usa.gov/xvHmR)  
[go.usa.gov/xvHmR](https://go.usa.gov/xvHmR)



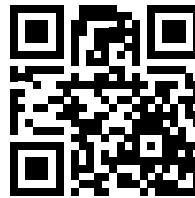
2. [Workplaces During the COVID-19 Pandemic](https://go.usa.gov/xvucp)  
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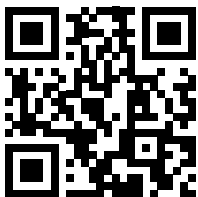
7. [What to Do If You Are Sick](https://go.usa.gov/xvHsF)  
[go.usa.gov/xvHsF](https://go.usa.gov/xvHsF)



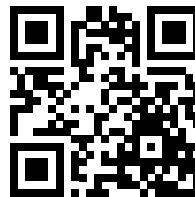
3. [Restaurants and Bars During the COVID-19 Pandemic](https://go.usa.gov/xvuc7)  
[go.usa.gov/xvuc7](https://go.usa.gov/xvuc7)



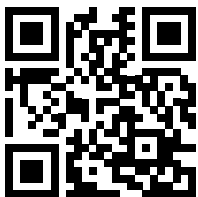
8. [Discontinuation of Isolation for Persons with COVID -19 Not in Healthcare Settings](https://go.usa.gov/xvHem)  
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4. [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](https://go.usa.gov/xvHma)  
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9. [Caring for Someone Sick at Home](https://go.usa.gov/xvHew)  
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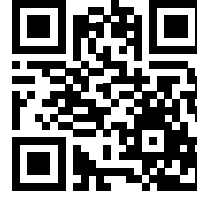
5. [Directory of local health departments](https://bit.ly/LHDDirectory)  
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10. [When and How to Wash Your Hands](https://go.usa.gov/xvz7T)  
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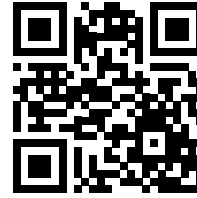
11. [Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](https://www.eeoc.gov/what-you-should-know-about-the-ada-the-rehabilitation-act-and-the-coronavirus)  
[go.usa.gov/xvz7R](https://go.usa.gov/xvz7R)



17. [Americans with Disabilities Act](https://www.eeoc.gov/what-you-should-know-about-the-ada-the-rehabilitation-act-and-the-coronavirus)  
[go.usa.gov/xvHtF](https://go.usa.gov/xvHtF)



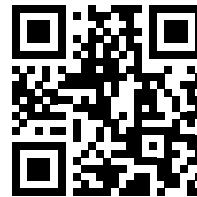
12. [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](https://www.eeoc.gov/what-you-should-know-about-the-ada-the-rehabilitation-act-and-the-coronavirus)  
[go.usa.gov/xvzH2](https://go.usa.gov/xvzH2)



18. [Public Health Recommendations for Community-Related Exposure](https://www.eeoc.gov/what-you-should-know-about-the-ada-the-rehabilitation-act-and-the-coronavirus)  
[go.usa.gov/xvHz3](https://go.usa.gov/xvHz3)



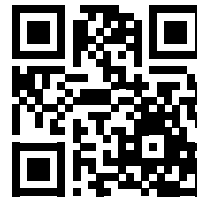
13. [Gatherings and Community Events](https://www.eeoc.gov/what-you-should-know-about-the-ada-the-rehabilitation-act-and-the-coronavirus)  
[go.usa.gov/xvHeJ](https://go.usa.gov/xvHeJ)



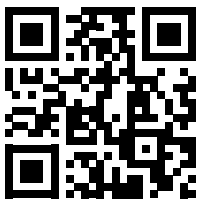
19. [CISA's Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce](https://www.eeoc.gov/what-you-should-know-about-the-ada-the-rehabilitation-act-and-the-coronavirus)  
[go.usa.gov/xvHuV](https://go.usa.gov/xvHuV)



14. [Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19](https://www.eeoc.gov/what-you-should-know-about-the-ada-the-rehabilitation-act-and-the-coronavirus)  
[go.usa.gov/xvzH8](https://go.usa.gov/xvzH8)



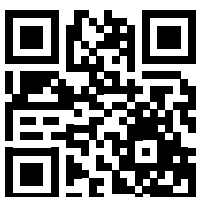
20. [Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](https://www.eeoc.gov/what-you-should-know-about-the-ada-the-rehabilitation-act-and-the-coronavirus)  
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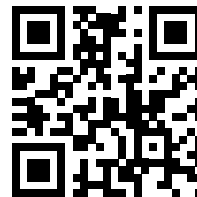
15. [General Business Frequently Asked Questions](https://www.eeoc.gov/what-you-should-know-about-the-ada-the-rehabilitation-act-and-the-coronavirus)  
[go.usa.gov/xvHtY](https://go.usa.gov/xvHtY)



21. [People Who Are at Higher Risk for Severe Illness](https://www.eeoc.gov/what-you-should-know-about-the-ada-the-rehabilitation-act-and-the-coronavirus)  
[go.usa.gov/xvHJ8](https://go.usa.gov/xvHJ8)



16. [EEOC's What You Should Know About the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act and the Coronavirus](https://www.eeoc.gov/what-you-should-know-about-the-ada-the-rehabilitation-act-and-the-coronavirus)  
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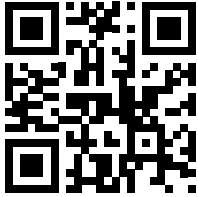
22. [People Who Need to Take Extra Precautions](https://www.eeoc.gov/what-you-should-know-about-the-ada-the-rehabilitation-act-and-the-coronavirus)  
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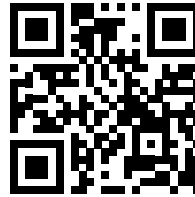
23. [Social Distancing](https://go.usa.gov/xvHhV)  
[go.usa.gov/xvHhV](https://go.usa.gov/xvHhV)



29. [Print Resources](https://go.usa.gov/xv6qa)  
[go.usa.gov/xv6qa](https://go.usa.gov/xv6qa)



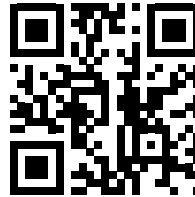
24. [Hierarchy of Controls](https://go.usa.gov/xvHhM)  
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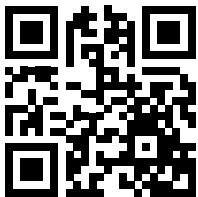
30. [Health Promotion Materials](https://go.usa.gov/xv6q4)  
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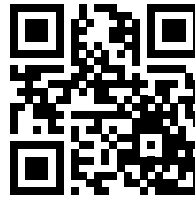
25. [ASHRAE's Guidance for Building Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic](https://bit.ly/ASHRAECOVID19)  
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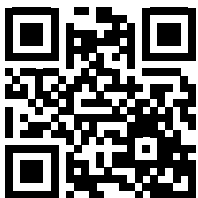
31. [List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2](https://go.usa.gov/xv635)  
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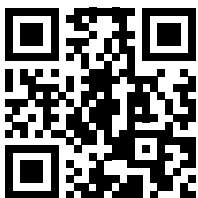
26. [Guidance for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation](https://go.usa.gov/xvHhh)  
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32. [CDC's Travel Health Notices](https://go.usa.gov/xv63R)  
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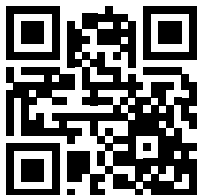
27. [Coughing and Sneezing](https://go.usa.gov/xv6qN)  
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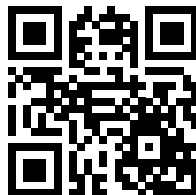
28. [Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives](https://go.usa.gov/xv6qJ)  
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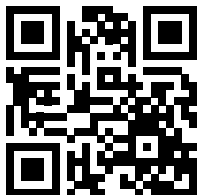
## Additional Resources



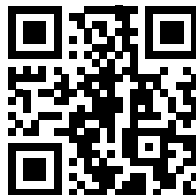
[COVID-19 Factsheets for Businesses and Employers](https://www.go.usa.gov/xv63M)  
[go.usa.gov/xv63M](https://www.go.usa.gov/xv63M)



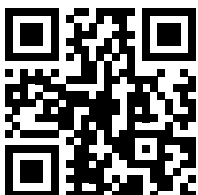
[Hazard Identification and Assessment](https://www.go.usa.gov/xv6dT)  
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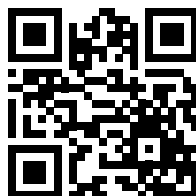
[Personal Protective Equipment](https://www.go.usa.gov/xv63h)  
[go.usa.gov/xv63h](https://www.go.usa.gov/xv63h)



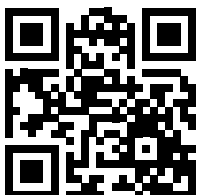
[How to Protect Yourself and Others](https://www.go.usa.gov/xv6dV)  
[go.usa.gov/xv6dV](https://www.go.usa.gov/xv6dV)



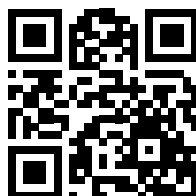
[Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\) Standards](https://www.go.usa.gov/xv6ph)  
[go.usa.gov/xv6ph](https://www.go.usa.gov/xv6ph)



[OSHA Ten Steps](https://www.go.usa.gov/xv6dd)  
[go.usa.gov/xv6dd](https://www.go.usa.gov/xv6dd)



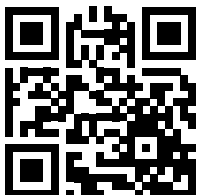
[U.S. Department of Labor](https://www.go.usa.gov/xv6da)  
[go.usa.gov/xv6da](https://www.go.usa.gov/xv6da)



[State & Territorial Health Department Websites](https://www.go.usa.gov/xv6dG)  
[go.usa.gov/xv6dG](https://www.go.usa.gov/xv6dG)



[U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](https://www.go.usa.gov/xv6dY)  
[go.usa.gov/xv6dY](https://www.go.usa.gov/xv6dY)



[Coping with Stress](https://www.go.usa.gov/xv6dg)  
[go.usa.gov/xv6dg](https://www.go.usa.gov/xv6dg)

**[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)**



**U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services**  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention