

BACKGROUND

COVID-19 can be transmitted from infected individuals even if they are asymptomatic or their symptoms are mild, such as a cough. It can also be spread by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes. As certain life-sustaining businesses in the commonwealth remain open, there are several precautions that employers and employees must take to protect themselves, their families and residents across the state.

PROTECTING EMPLOYEES AT ESSENTIAL BUSINESSES

All businesses authorized to continue in-person operations, other than health care providers, should do the following:

- Clean and disinfect high-touch areas frequently and continue to regularly clean all other areas of the building;
- Establish a plan in case an employee is exposed to a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19;
- Take each employee's temperature before they enter the building and send those who have a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, or higher, home;
- Prevent large groups from entering or leaving the building by staggering work start and stop times;
- Limit the number of people in employee common areas, like locker rooms or break rooms and ensure these areas are getting cleaned frequently;
- Conduct meetings and trainings virtually. If a meeting needs to be held in person, limit the number of employees to 10 and maintain a social distance of six feet;
- Make sure employees have access to soap and water to wash their hands, hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes;
- Provide masks for employees to wear at all times and make it mandatory to wear while on the work site. Employers may approve masks obtained or made by employees according to department policies;
- Make sure the facility has enough employees to conduct business effectively and safely; and
- Do not allow non-essential visitors from entering the business.

PROTECTING EMPLOYEES AT ESSENTIAL BUSINESSES THAT SERVE THE PUBLIC

Businesses that serve the public inside a building or other defined area should follow the above guidance and take the additional precautions listed below:

- Conduct business with the public by appointment only, whenever possible;
- If appointment-only service is not feasible, businesses must limit the amount of people inside the building to no more than 50% of the total occupancy;
- Change the hours of business so there is enough time to clean and restock;
- Install shields or other barriers at registers and check-out areas to physically separate cashiers and customers, or take other measures to maintain social distancing between customers and employees;
- Encourage customers to use online ordering by providing delivery or pick-up options;
- Designate a specific time for high-risk and elderly people to use the business at least once a week;
- Require all customers to wear masks to enter the store. If the customer cannot wear a mask, they should not be allowed in. For supermarkets and pharmacies, if a customer cannot wear a mask, these stores must provide an alternate means of delivering goods;

- In businesses with multiple check-out lanes, use every other register. After every hour, rotate customers and employees to the previously closed registers and clean the previously open registers and the surrounding areas;
- Schedule handwashing breaks for employees at least every hour; and
- Assign an employee to wipe down carts and handbaskets before the customer uses it.

IF AN EMPLOYEE WAS EXPOSED TO COVID-19:

- Close off areas where the probable or confirmed case of COVID-19 was;
- Open outside doors and windows and use ventilation fans to circulate air in the area;
- Wait at least 24 hours, or as long as practical, before cleaning and disinfecting;
- Clean and disinfect all shared areas such as offices, bathrooms, break rooms, shared electronic equipment (tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls) and ATM machines used by the sick person;
- Identify employees that were in close contact with the probable or confirmed COVID-19 case; and
- Take every employee's temperature before they enter the building or before each shift, and send home anyone with a fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, or higher;

Employees who have symptoms should notify their supervisor and stay home. Sick employees should follow CDC-recommended steps and not return to work until the certain criteria for returning back to work are met.

RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

The full guidance for essential businesses can be found [here](#).

For more information, visit <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

The latest information on the coronavirus in the U.S. and worldwide can be found on the [CDC website](#).

Interim guidance for critical workers can be found [here](#).

Help is available, contact the **Crisis Text Line by texting PA to 741-741**.