

City of Columbus COVID-19 Safe Work Practice Guidance

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Purpose

The purpose of this Safe Work Practice is to:

- Reduce the likelihood that all employees, visitors and volunteers will become infected by those with a contagious airborne or droplet-transmitted disease.
- Increase the City of Columbus’s ability to continue its core missions and return to normal operations in a timely manner.
- Minimize the disruption and impact on employee’s lives that occur with pandemics, epidemics, and other respiratory illness outbreaks.
- Maintain consistency with OSHA Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace for non-health care employees.

Objective

The objective of this guidance is reducing the spread of infection by implementing safe work practices that will help reduce transmission by decreasing contact between sick and uninfected persons in the workplace.

Please note – this is a quickly-evolving pandemic and recommendations in work practices are subject to change quickly if recommendations from Centers for Disease Control, the Occupational Safety and

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Health Administration, Ohio Department of Health, Columbus Public Health, Citywide Occupational Safety and Health Program, or your Department/Division change.

Because of the nature of any respiratory illnesses, the object is to focus on educating and protecting employees as well as curtailing the spread of the disease. Employee protection and service delivery can be achieved through a combination of infection control methods and the use of personal preventive measures and equipment.

This document is a best management practice designed to supplement, NOT REPLACE, any Mayor's Executive Orders or Policies, or any Department/Division policies, procedures, or guidance.

Daily Health Monitoring and Face Coverings

Face Coverings

Face coverings are no longer required to be worn in most City of Columbus buildings. Please note – face coverings are still required for individuals completing isolation or quarantine requirements, per CDC guidelines.

If you work in or enter a healthcare/clinical setting – please follow the face covering and PPE requirements of the appointing authority; which may be different or more stringent in some circumstances. Please note: there is always a potential for cases and transmission of COVID-19 to increase to a level in which – in order to continue to provide essential City services – face covering requirements or other prevention measures may return. Employees may always choose to wear a face covering or N95 or KN95 as an additional level of protection. Ensure compliance with OSHA 29CFR1910.134, Appendix D when voluntarily using N95 or KN95 respirators.

When face coverings are required at work due to isolation or quarantine guidelines:

- To reflect CDC guidance, a face shield is not permitted to be used in lieu of a face covering unless the employee has a written medical exception approved by the employee's Human Resources Manager. CDC guidance allows for the use of a neck gaiter as a face covering IF the neck gaiter is at least 2-layers or is folded to create 2 layers.
- Face coverings (or N95 respirators) with exhalation valves or vents are NOT recommended as they do not adequately prevent the person wearing the mask from spreading COVID-19 to others. If an N95 respirator with an exhalation valve must be worn because there are no alternatives, it should have an additional face covering or surgical mask over it covering the exhalation valve. Additional safety measures may need to be taken, including more frequent breaks, in instances where heat stress is a concern.

Additional note regarding face coverings: when the community has high or substantial transmission of COVID-19, a face covering is recommended and may be required - even if you are fully vaccinated – because of an increase of community spread.

Required daily self-monitoring (at home)

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This applies to all City of Columbus employees who will be reporting to work. Prior to coming to work each day, employees must self-evaluate for the below symptoms.

If you have the symptoms below, do not report to work. Call your supervisor and your health care provider. Supervisors should contact their Department/Division Human Resources Officer/Manager. If you do not have a health care provider, call your local health department. Columbus Public Health COVID-19 hotline is 614-645-1519.

Any of the following symptoms:

- **Fever** (Fever is $\geq 101.4^{\circ}\text{F}$)
- **Cough (new or worsening)**
- **Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing**
- **Fatigue**
- **Headache**
- **Congestion or runny nose (new or worsening)**
- **Nausea or vomiting**
- **Diarrhea**
- **Chills**
- **Muscle pain**
- **Sore throat**
- **New loss of taste or smell**

Health Screenings (at Work)

Upon arrival to work, the Department must screen employees with the below questions. This screening process may occur in a variety of ways; however, the employee cannot begin work until the health assessment is completed. For privacy purposes, documentation of the screening process should not include whether or not an employee passed or failed the test, just whether the employee was screened with the below questions. The COVID-19 screening process that occurs when an employee logs into the City of Columbus network DOES fulfill the work health screening requirement. The health assessment no longer includes taking temperatures of employees at the work site.

Questions:

- When you took your temperature at home prior to coming to work, did you have a fever?
 - Fever is $\geq 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$
- Are you experiencing shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, or do you have a new or worsening cough?
- Are you experiencing any of the following symptoms: chills, muscle or body aches, sore throat, fatigue, headache, runny nose or congestion (new or worsening), nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, or new loss of taste or smell?

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- Are you, anyone residing in your household, or anyone who you were within 6 feet of for at least 15 minutes in a 24 hour period (regardless of PPE use or other preventive measures):
 - currently being tested for COVID-19 after having developed symptoms, at the recommendation of a healthcare provider or local health department or in follow up to exposure to a person with COVID-19; or
 - clinically diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider, or
 - Tested positive for COVID-19.

NOTE: You or someone in your home who is asymptomatic and being tested for COVID-19 in preparation for a medical procedure or for travel or simply for peace of mind would NOT disqualify you from reporting to work.

If the employee answers “Yes” to any of the questions above they should be sent home immediately unless they are exempt from quarantine*. The employee’s supervisor should contact your Department/Division Human Resources representative to notify them of any employees sent home or needing to remain at home due to responding yes to these questions. **Please refer to City of Columbus Employees COVID-19 FAQs (FAQ #16) for return to work and testing guidance after answering “Yes” to any of the health screening questions.**

****Exceptions for staying home/quarantine after close contact with someone with COVID-19:***

1. An employee who meets the below criteria does NOT need to quarantine:
 - Had COVID-19 illness within the previous 3 months **and**
 - Has recovered **and**
 - Remains without COVID-19 symptoms (for example, cough, shortness of breath). Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery
2. An employee who meets the below criteria, and is not showing symptoms of COVID-19, does NOT need to quarantine :
 - **Is up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations. Up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations means a person has received all recommended COVID-19 vaccines, including any booster dose(s) when eligible.**

NOTE: It is recommended that the close contact employees get tested on day 5 after their exposure (even if they don’t have symptoms) AND shall wear a mask indoors in public for 10 days following exposure ~~or until their test result is negative~~. If you develop symptoms – get a test, isolate, and stay home.

Employee may be asked to provide CDC COVID-19 vaccination card for verification of vaccination dates.

If an employee has a confirmed positive test or a clinical diagnosis for COVID-19: Employees who have tested positive or have been clinically diagnosed with COVID-19 shall not report to work. Employees must notify their supervisor and Human Resources Officer/Manager

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if they receive a positive COVID-19 test result or clinical diagnosis so return to work procedures can be determined. Human Resources Officer/Manager will then initiate the COVID-19 Flow Chart. The COVID-19 flow charts can be found on the Department of Human Resources home intranet page. Refer to the applicable flow chart to screen employees – there is a separate flow chart for critical Infrastructure and non-critical infrastructure employees.

Everyone, regardless of vaccination status who tests positive must, at minimum:

- Isolate and stay home for 5 days from the onset of symptoms* or from the **date the test specimen was collected** if there are no symptoms. -AND-
- **End isolation after 5 full days if you are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication) and your symptoms are improving (if you had symptoms)****. If you are asymptomatic and then develop symptoms – begin the 5 day count again after you develop symptoms. Employees are not permitted to return to work until symptoms improve. -AND-
- Must continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days, for a total of 10 days.
 - NOTE: Physician's or health department guidance should always be followed if it differs from the isolation/return to work guidance listed above. Some employees who experience severe symptoms of COVID-19 illness may require more than 5 or 10 days of isolation – they should work with their physician to determine the appropriate return to work plan.
 - NOTE: While testing to end isolation following a COVID-19 illness is not recommended by the CDC, if an individual has access to a test and wants to test, the best approach is to use an antigen test (i.e., NOT PCR test) towards the end of the 5-day isolation period. Collect the test sample only if you are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and your other symptoms have improved (loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation). If your test result is positive, you should continue to isolate until day 10. If your test result is negative, you can end isolation, but continue to wear a mask around others at home and in public until day 10. Do not require a test to return to work following a COVID-19 illness.

* *To calculate your 5-day isolation period, day 0 is your first day of symptoms. Day 1 is the first full day after your symptoms developed. For asymptomatic people; Day 0 is the day of your positive viral test (based on the date you were tested) and day 1 is the first full day after the specimen was collected for your positive test.*

** *If you have a fever, continue to isolate and stay home until the fever has resolved for 24 hours.*

Visitors

Continue to post signage asking the public NOT to enter if they are experiencing symptoms of illness.

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City of Columbus Safe Work Practices

NOTE: The City of Columbus COVID-19 Safe Work Practices listed below are consistent with OSHA guidance: Protecting Workers: Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace. **City of Columbus employees who are considered healthcare employees will have additional requirements, which will be developed within the Departments that have healthcare employees.**

Time, Distance, and Shielding

- **Six feet (6') of social distancing is recommended for those who are NOT up to date on COVID-19 vaccines or who are at higher risk of getting very sick with COVID-19. If six feet (6') of distancing cannot be accommodated for employees who are not up to date on COVID-19 vaccines or employees who are at higher risk of getting very sick with COVID-19, additional measures can be implemented such as barriers and offering N95 or KN95 respirators to employees for employees to use on a voluntary basis. Ensure compliance with OSHA 29CFR1910.134, Appendix D when voluntarily using N95 or KN95 respirators.**
- Consider cross-training employees to perform essential functions so the workplace can operate even if key employees are absent.
- Be aware that some employees may be at higher risk for serious illness, such as older adults and those with chronic medical conditions. Consider minimizing face-to-face contact between these employees or assign work tasks that allow them to maintain a distance of six feet from other workers, customers and visitors, or to telework if possible. If this is not possible, consider providing an N95 or KN95 respirator to these employees to use on a voluntary basis. Ensure compliance with OSHA 29CFR1910.134, Appendix D when voluntarily using N95 or KN95 respirators.
- **Continue to utilize virtual meetings and options when possible/feasible.**
- Create drop off availability for documents when electronic submittal is not possible. When possible, request information via telephone/email/fax.
- If repeated contact with people who are ill is unavoidable, take precautionary measures (examples include, using a teller window, physical barrier which maintains a distance of 6 feet, other person dons surgical mask to prevent droplet).

Hygiene Practices

- Discourage workers from using other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible
- Remove or redirect personal fans to prevent blowing air from one worker to another.
- Disinfect shared work surfaces between uses.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol based hand cleaners, especially after coughing or sneezing and before smoking or eating. Avoid touching your face/mouth/nose/eyes.
- Hand sanitizer: Should be at least 60% or greater alcohol content.

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- Use cough and sneeze etiquette: cough and sneeze into your inner elbow or arm to reduce droplets. If you contaminate your hands with a cough or sneeze, immediately wash your hands with soap and water or use sanitizer if hand washing is not available.

Cleaning/disinfecting practices

- Establish a cleaning schedule in your work station/area if you don't already have one. Pay particular attention to high-touch surface areas. Shared work surfaces should be cleaned/sanitized between uses.
- When no people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 are known to have been in a space, cleaning once a day is usually enough to sufficiently remove virus that may be on surfaces and help maintain a healthy facility.
 - Cleaning with products containing soap or detergent reduces germs on surfaces by removing contaminants and may also weaken or damage some of the virus particles, which decreases risk of infection from surfaces.
 - Disinfecting (using EPA's List N) kills any remaining germs on surfaces, which further reduces any risk of spreading infection.
- In most cases, fogging, fumigation, and wide-area or electrostatic spraying is not recommended as a primary method of surface disinfection
- As a recommended best practice, maintain 3 weeks of cleaning supplies.
- If an employee becomes symptomatic while at work, or if there has been a sick person or someone who tested positive for COVID-19 in the facility within the last 24 hours, isolate or remove the employee immediately and contact the department human resources officer. Keep employees away from the ill employee's work area until a cleaning and disinfection can be performed.
 - Contact custodial/facility management for your building when there is/has been an ill person in the workplace. Do not wait for a positive test result.
 - Refer to the CDC's Coronavirus cleaning and disinfecting guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>.
 - **If less than 24 hours have passed** since the person who is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the space, clean and disinfect the space.
 - **If more than 24 hours have passed** since the person who is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the space, cleaning is enough.
 - **If more than 3 days have passed** since the person who is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the space, no additional cleaning (beyond regular cleaning practices) is needed.

Facility/Building Considerations

- Post signage at City buildings that directs visitors NOT to enter if they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. Consider posting these signs in multiple languages, where needed.

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- Signage on COVID-19 related health and safety guidelines are required in common areas. Examples can be found on the CDC website.
- Consider improving the engineering controls using the building ventilation system. This may include some or all of the following activities¹:
 - Increase outdoor air ventilation (disable demand-controlled ventilation and open outdoor air dampers as much as possible as indoor and outdoor conditions permit).
 - Increasing ventilation with all or mostly outside air may not always be possible or practical. In such cases, the effective rate of ventilation per person can also be increased by limiting the number of people present in the building in general, or in specific rooms.
 - Consider updating or replacing existing HVAC air filtration to a minimum of **MERV 13 or the highest compatible with the filter rack**, and seal edges of the filter to limit by-pass. Make sure the air handling systems and fans can overcome the additional pressure drop of the new filters and still maintain air flow at acceptable levels.
 - Keep HVAC systems running longer hours (24/7 if possible).
 - Consider adding portable room air cleaners with HEPA or high-MERV filters in locations where:
 - Filter efficiency cannot be increased in the HVAC system, and/or
 - Fresh air levels in the HVAC system do not exist or cannot be increased, and/or
 - There is a high concentration of employees in an area that cannot be decreased (i.e., call centers, open sleeping quarters, large cubicle areas).
 - Portable air cleaners and HVAC filters can reduce indoor air pollutants, including viruses. By themselves, portable air cleaners and HVAC filters are not enough to protect people from the virus that causes COVID-19. When used along with other best practices recommended by CDC and others, filtration can be part of a plan to protect people indoors.
 - Consider bypassing energy recovery ventilation systems that leak potentially contaminated exhaust air back into the outdoor air supply.
 - Consider opening windows as an enhancement for outside air, especially when the system cannot accommodate MERV-13 filter or 100% outside air.
 - When changing HVAC or portable HEPA unit filters, wear appropriate personal protective equipment. ASHRAE recommends N95 respirators, eye protection (safety glasses, goggles, or face shields), and disposable gloves.
 - Make sure exhaust fans in restrooms are fully functional, operating at maximum capacity, and are set to remain on.
- **Reduce the risk of cross contamination at drinking fountains by ensuring regular cleaning of the touchpoints of the fountain.**
- Reduce the risk of cross contamination at ice machines by following the below steps:
 - Keep ice bin doors closed when not in use.
 - Employees must wash their hands, or use hand sanitizer if handwashing facilities are not immediately available, before accessing the ice machine.

¹ American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) Position Document on Infectious Aerosols, April 14, 2020 and ASHRAE COVID-19 Technical Resources for Commercial and Office Buildings (<https://www.ashrae.org/technical-resources/commercial#general>)

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- Utilize a scoop to dispense ice.
- Ice scoops should be stored outside the ice bin, unless the bin is equipped with scoop storage inside the bin. The ice scoop should not be stored on/touching the ice.
- Ice scoop should not touch the surface/rim of a personal drinking container.
- Ice scoops must be cleaned/disinfected daily. Ice scoops are considered food contact surfaces and disinfectant used should be approved for food contact surfaces. Please refer to the disinfectant manufacturer instructions to ensure the chemical is safe for food contact surfaces and to determine proper preparation of disinfecting solution.

Additional Guidelines for Field Work

- **If employees are riding together in a vehicle, it is recommended that** the vehicle ventilation should be kept on 100% fresh air and not on the recirculation function.
- Any City business that will occur within someone's home should first be triaged by phone to determine:
 - If anyone in the home is experiencing any symptoms of illness (fever, or other flu-like symptoms)
 - If they answer no to illness symptoms, let the citizen know that the City of Columbus employee will ask those questions again upon arrival and if anyone in the home is experiencing those symptoms the need for the home visit will be re-evaluated.
- During an in-home visit:
 - Upon arrival and before entering the home, ask again if anyone in the home is experiencing any symptoms of illness. If they are – reach out to your supervisor to determine if the visit will move forward.
 - **As an additional precautionary measure, employees can always choose to wear a face covering or N95 or KN95 respirator on a voluntary basis. Ensure compliance with OSHA 29CFR1910.134, Appendix D when voluntarily using N95 or KN95 respirators**
 - Hand Hygiene: Hand sanitizer or hand wipes should be used prior to entering the home or business. Gloves are also recommended, particularly if you will be touching anything in the home or business.
 - As much as possible, do not touch anything.
 - Do not touch your face, mouth, nose, or eyes while in the home or business.
 - Do not shake hands with the resident or client and do not share pens or other equipment.
 - If worn, remove gloves upon exiting in a manner that does not contaminate the hands.
 - Perform hand hygiene with hand sanitizer or wipes upon exiting. Wash hands with soap and water as soon as possible.
- If an in-home or in-business inspection **MUST** be conducted at a location of someone who is exhibiting flu-like symptoms or other similar symptoms of illness additional personal protective equipment will be required, **PLEASE SEEK THE GUIDANCE FROM**

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YOUR DEPARTMENT/DIVISION SAFETY PROFESSIONAL PRIOR TO CONDUCTING THE IN-HOME OR IN-BUSINESS VISIT.

The Citywide Occupational Safety and Health Program is available for guidance in determining appropriate measures, if requested.

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Use of Face Coverings and COVID-19 (updated V22)

Layered prevention strategies — like staying up to date on vaccines and wearing masks — can help prevent severe illness and reduce the potential for strain on the healthcare system. If you wear a face covering/mask, wear a mask with the best fit, protection, and comfort for you. Understanding the level of community spread in your community will help you determine what is best for you. You can find these levels at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>.

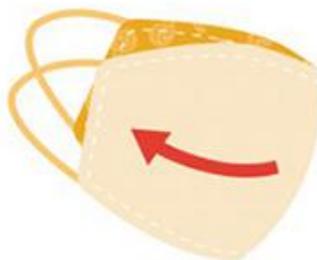
You may choose to wear a mask or respirator that offers greater protection in certain situations, such as when you are with people at higher risk for severe illness, or if you are at higher risk for severe illness.

It is important to wear a mask or respirator when you are sick or caring for someone who is sick with COVID-19. When caring for someone who is sick with COVID-19, a respirator will provide you the best level of protection.

How to care for your mask

Removing your mask:

- Disposable masks and cloth masks: Untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops and fold the outside corners together.
 - If your cloth mask is wet or dirty, put it in a sealed plastic bag until you can wash it. This will keep it from getting moldy.
 - If your cloth mask is dry and clean, you can store it in a breathable bag (like a paper or mesh fabric bag) to keep it clean between uses in the same day.
 - Cloth masks should be washed at least once a day or as soon as they become wet or dirty. You can either wash and dry your masks by hand or use a washer and dryer.
- Respirators: Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Wash or sanitizer your hands after removing any mask.



Taking off your mask while you eat or drink:

- If you are taking off your mask to eat or drink outside of your home, you can place it somewhere safe to keep it clean, such as your pocket, purse, or paper bag.
- After eating, put the mask back on with the same side facing out.
- Be sure to wash or sanitize your hands again after taking off your mask and after putting your mask back on.

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When to throw away or change your mask:

- Disposable masks should be thrown away after they're worn once.
- If you use respirators, check the manufacturer's instructions to learn how long they can be worn before they should be thrown away.
- Disposable masks and respirators that become wet or dirty should be thrown away in the trash right away. Do **not** continue to wear a wet or dirty mask. Replace it with a dry, clean mask.

Please note: If you work in a healthcare/clinical setting, the CDC has additional guidelines regarding the use and reuse of surgical masks and N95 respirators. Please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/index.html> for more information.

For more information regarding face coverings (including how to make face coverings), masks, and N95/KN95 respirators – please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/types-of-masks.html>.