

Allen County Business Guidance

Creating your COVID-19 Plan

The Ohio Department of Health has identified 5 protocols that should be used by all businesses to protect against COVID-19. Implementing all five protocols, along with taking immediate action when a COVID-19 Infection is identified will greatly reduce the spread of the virus in our community. Allen County Public Health has developed this resource to help your business implement these protocols and provide a safe work environment. Businesses should use this document as a guide to create a plan that best works for their employees and customers/visitors.

NOTE: Links to posters and signs are at the Allen County Public Health website:

[https://www.allencountypublichealth.org/emergency-preparedness/coronavirus-covid-19/responsible-restart-ohio-resources/.](https://www.allencountypublichealth.org/emergency-preparedness/coronavirus-covid-19/responsible-restart-ohio-resources/)

5 PROTOCOLS FOR ALL BUSINESSES

1. Require face coverings for employees and recommend them for clients/customers at all times.

“My mask protects you, your mask protects me.” Face coverings keep coronavirus droplets from getting into the air, and is **one of the most important tools** to block the spread of coronavirus, especially from people who have the virus but not the symptoms of COVID-19.

The Ohio Department of Health requires all employees to wear face coverings unless it is prohibited by law or regulation, a violation of documented industry standards, it is not advisable for health reasons, in violation of the businesses safety policies, or there is a functional reason for an employee not to wear one. Businesses will need to provide written justification on request explaining why an employee is not required to wear a facial covering in the workplace (Directors Order, 5/29/2020).

To consider:

- Employee training on the proper use of face coverings [How to use Cloth Face Coverings poster](#)
- Reminders for employees to wear face coverings in common spaces [Face Coverings for Employees](#)
- Reminders to clients/customers to wear face coverings [Face Coverings Recommended poster](#)
- System for documenting reason employee(s) are unable to wear face coverings
- Whether to provide face coverings for employees or visitors

If Allen County Public Health (ACPH) receives a complaint about face coverings, businesses must provide written justification to ACPH, along with steps for corrective action, if needed.

2. Conduct daily health assessments by employers and employees (self-evaluation) to determine if “fit for duty.”

There are several ways to check the health of your employees before they start their work shift.

Self-reporting process

This involves asking your employees to answer questions before reporting to work. You can set up an online form or have employees call and check in before each shift. A recommended question would include:

Do you have **any of the following symptoms**: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, muscle pain or body aches, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea?

- If an employee has symptoms, follow the guidance in Allen County Public Health’s ***Quarantine, Isolation and Contact Tracing*** document.

Temperature checks

- It is recommended to take employee temperatures before every shift prior to entering the workplace using a touchless (forehead/temporal artery) thermometer. If your workplace cannot find touchless thermometers, employees can take their temperature at home and report it before coming in to work.
 - If an employee has a temperature of 100.4 or more, they should arrange for testing and follow the guidance in Allen County Public Health’s ***Quarantine, Isolation, and Contact Tracing*** document.

To consider:

- Accommodations for employees with underlying medical conditions or who have household members with underlying medical conditions
- Policy that encourages employees to stay home if they are sick
- Policy or procedure for informing employees if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 at their workplace and requiring them to quarantine for the required amount of time
- Policy that protects the privacy of workers’ health status and health information
 - Reminders to supervisory staff and employees of this policy

Creating your COVID-19 Plan

3. Maintain good hygiene at all times – handwashing and social distancing

Handwashing, Hand Sanitizers and Respiratory Etiquette

Your hands can spread virus to other surfaces and/or to your mouth, nose, or eyes if you touch them. Frequently washing hands, especially after coughing or sneezing will help prevent the spread of the virus.

To consider:

- Required handwashing at the beginning and end of each shift and throughout the day
- Training on proper handwashing and use of hand sanitizers
- Easy to access hand washing facilities or hand sanitizers for all employees and visitors
- Easy to access tissues and trash receptacles for employees and visitors
- Information sharing on where supplies are stored so that they can be replenished
- Posters throughout the workplace that encourage cough/sneeze etiquette and hand hygiene [Protect Yourself poster here](#)
- Coordinator designated for keeping supplies (handwashing, tissues, cleaning) in stock

Social Distancing

Along with face coverings, keeping space between you and others is one of the best tools we have to avoid being exposed to the virus and slowing its spread. This is especially important for people who are at higher risk from severe illness from COVID-19.

To consider:

- Telework policy for personnel who can work from home if feasible with business operations
- Reminder signs for social distancing at key locations [Social Distancing poster](#)
- List of symptoms at each entry point [Symptoms poster](#) or [Health Screening form](#)
- Work stations and physical barriers between employees /customers at 6 feet or more wherever possible
 - Tape marks or other visual cues to indicate where to stand when physical barriers are not possible
- Staggered arrivals of employees and guests
- Staggered lunch and break schedules
- Reminder signs on maximum number for cafeterias or common spaces [Break Time poster](#)
 - Removed or blocked off tables, chairs and/or seating to promote social distancing
- Employees required to drive alone (except for emergency situations) in company vehicles
- Videoconference meetings to replace in-person meetings
 - If videoconferences are not possible, meetings held in open well-ventilated spaces
- Policies that provide flexible work hours, meetings and travel options

Creating your COVID-19 Plan

- Remote services or curbside pickup when possible
- Designated doorways as “entry only” or “exit only.”
- Information sharing to visitors on company policies to help control the spread of COVID-19.

4. Clean and sanitize workplaces throughout the workday and at the close of business or between shifts.

Cleaning means removing germs like COVID-19 and dirt from surfaces using soap and water. Disinfecting chemicals remove the remaining germs on the surface.

To consider:

- [Disinfectant](#) that works against COVID-19
- Training for all employees who clean and disinfect on the proper use of disinfectants in accordance with product labels, safety data sheets, and manufacturer specifications
- Gloves and other PPE available and required for the chemicals being used
- Cleaning and disinfecting plan and schedule
- Double efforts to keep restrooms clean and disinfected
- Wipes and reminder signs to clean high-touch items after each use
- Schedule for gathering spaces to be closed to conduct regular cleanings
- Three week stock of cleaning supplies

5. Limit capacity to meet social distancing guidelines

Limiting capacity is an important tool to support social distancing.

To consider:

- Maximum capacity that will ensure social distancing [Maximum capacity sign](#)
- Process to ensure maximum capacity is maintained
- Appointment procedures to limit congestion

TAKE ACTIONS WHEN A COVID-19 INFECTION IS IDENTIFIED

Acting quickly when COVID-19 is identified will help contain the virus.

To consider:

- Designated areas where employees can be immediately separated from others if they have symptoms
- Designated areas reviewed ahead of time with supervisors or all employees
- Plan for safe transport of a sick employee or visitor to home or a healthcare facility
- Plan for quickly identifying contacts of the sick employee
- Up to date list of testing locations and information to share with employees (check <https://www.allencountypublichealth.org/emergency-preparedness/coronavirus-covid-19/> for more information).
- Company procedure for deep cleaning the area used by the ill employee.
 - Recommended actions include: close off area used by sick employee, wait 24 hours if possible, open outside doors and window to increase air circulation during waiting, deep clean and sanitize the area. See [CDC guidance](#) for more information.
- If your company is planning to contract with a professional company for deep cleaning, obtain quotes and contract ahead of time.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

Communication

- Designate a coordinator who is in charge of COVID-19 issues.
- Develop strategies to communicate with workers and manage concerns.
- Develop plans to help alleviate stress and concerns for employees while at work, including information sharing on support services in the community. [Ohio Department of Health](#) includes a list of resources for adults coping with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Develop a training plan for all employees and for training new employees on the above protocols.

Ventilation

- Make sure ventilation systems are working properly and providing acceptable indoor air.
- If possible, increase ventilation rates/percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the ventilation system.
- If fans such as pedestal, desk or hard mounted fans are used, take steps to minimize air from fans blowing from one person directly to another. If fans are disabled, take steps to prevent heat hazards.