

GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR ALL BUSINESSES

BEST PRACTICES TO REOPEN

This guidance was developed to share general best practices for getting ready to reopen your business during the COVID-19 pandemic. Best business practices for COVID-19 may change over time. You are encouraged to visit <https://coronavirus.iowa.gov/pages/guidance> or <https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus/Guidance> for the latest information and resources related to Iowa's response to this health emergency.

Every business can act now to develop policies that will protect against workplace exposure to COVID-19 by protecting employees, educating customers and keeping your workplace safe and sanitary. Getting ready now will help you maintain stronger business operations and a healthier work environment for your employees and customers.



What is COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2. Symptoms often include a cough or shortness of breath and may also include fever, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, and a new loss of taste or smell. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person:

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about six feet)
- Through droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks

The virus may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms. It may be possible for a person to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their face. Older adults and those with serious underlying medical conditions may be at higher risk for more serious complications.

How can I get ready for return?

Plan to protect employees

- Have conversations with employees if they express concerns. Some people may be at higher risk of severe illness. This includes older adults and people of any age with serious underlying medical conditions.
- By using strategies that prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace, you will protect all employees, including those at higher risk. These strategies include:
 - Implement telework and other social distancing practices.
 - Require employees to stay home when sick.
 - Promote handwashing.
 - Provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and supplies for cleaning and disinfecting workspaces.
 - In workplaces where it's not possible to eliminate face-to-face contact, consider assigning higher-risk employees work tasks that allow them to maintain a six-foot distance from others.

Inform and educate workers and customers

- Place posters at the entrance to your workplace and where employees and customers are likely to see them. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has [print resources available](#).
- Post signage on the front door letting customers know about changes to your policies and instruct them to stay away if they are experiencing COVID-19-like symptoms.
- Provide regular updates to let employees know what they can expect. Develop training materials to share with employees covering these topics:
 - Social distancing measures that will be in place
 - How to protect yourself and others through hygiene and sanitation
 - The importance of not going to work or public places if you are feeling ill

Put policies in place

All employers are encouraged to develop and implement policies consistent with industry best practices to address these topics.

Social distancing

Maintaining social distancing is one of the most important ways to reduce the risk of infection. Physical space should be increased between employees and customers to maintain at least a six-foot distance at all times. The capacity of customer-facing businesses should be reduced to ensure that adequate distancing is possible.

Workplace changes to allow distancing can also include these steps:

- Discourage handshaking.
- Consider options to increase physical space between employees and customers, such as opening a drive-through, erecting partitions and marking floors to guide spacing at least six feet apart.
- Implement touchless payment options to minimize handling of cash, credit cards and mobile or electronic devices when possible.
- Downsize operations.
- Deliver products through curbside pick-up or delivery.
- Discourage workers from sharing phones, desks, offices and other work tools and equipment if possible.
- Instruct employees to sanitize shared workplace items before and after each use.

Meetings

- Implement flexible meeting and travel options (for example, postponing nonessential meetings or events).
- Deliver services remotely via phone, video or web.
- Hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces when teleconferencing is not possible.
- Consider supporting work from home where feasible.
- Consider alternating work teams where possible to reduce worker exposure.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) and cloth face coverings

- Train workers who need to use PPE on how to put it on, use/wear it, and take it off correctly. Training materials should be easy to understand and available in the appropriate language.
- Workers who have frequent, close contact with customers or other workers may need to wear some combination of a face mask, a face shield and/or goggles. PPE for workers will vary by work task and the types of exposures workers have on the job.
- Gloves can be a source of contamination if they are not removed properly. Without training, gloves may pose a greater risk of contamination than not wearing them. Use of gloves is not always recommended for every industry or job task.
- The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings, especially in areas of community transmission.
- A cloth face covering does not protect the wearer from viruses, but it may prevent the spread of viruses from the wearer to other people. Face coverings are not PPE and are not appropriate where masks or respirators are required.
- Employees should continue to follow their routine policies and procedures (if any) for PPE that they would ordinarily use for their job tasks.

Temperature checks and/or symptom screening: identify and isolate sick people

- Screening employees is recommended for some business sectors. If temperature checks are performed, employees taking temperatures should take precautions. The most protective methods involve maintaining a distance of six feet from others and/or physical barriers to minimize close contact with employees. If you screen employees, follow [CDC guidelines](#).
- Policies for prompt identification and isolation of sick people should include the following steps:
 - Encourage employees to self-monitor symptoms.
 - Develop a procedure for employees to report when they are sick.
 - Develop procedures for isolating ill employees, and train workers to implement them. Potentially infectious people should be moved to a location away from others, provided with a face mask or cloth face covering, and sent home.
- Establish policies for employee quarantine/return to work (see the “Reopening your business” section).



Sanitation

- Before opening: Sanitize your business to limit the spread of virus to your employees and customers. Minimize exposure by involving as few employees in this process as possible.
 - Clean and disinfect all areas. Give special attention to tools, workstations, restrooms, food service areas, phones, computers, and other electronics.
 - Replace HVAC air filters following the manufacturer's guidance. Workplaces should consult with HVAC professionals when considering ventilation changes to reduce the risk of COVID-19.
- Ensure that all water systems and features are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown. Consult the [CDC's webpage](#).
- **After opening:** Disinfect common and high-traffic areas
 - Common areas include door handles, desks, phones, light switches, and faucets. More information is on the [CDC website](#).
- Consider assigning people to clean and disinfect surfaces throughout the workplace, and provide training for disinfecting contaminated areas.
 - Always wear gloves appropriate for the chemicals being used when cleaning and disinfecting.
 - Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleaner.
 - Employers must ensure workers are trained on the hazards of the cleaning chemicals used in the workplace in accordance with [Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards](#).
- **Handwashing**
 - Provide soap and water in the workplace. Consider scheduling handwashing breaks so employees can wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. [CDC handwashing posters](#) are available.
 - Use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available. Place hand sanitizer in multiple locations to encourage good hand hygiene practices.
 - Provide tissues and no-touch trash receptacles.

• Cleaning and disinfecting machinery or equipment.

- If machinery or equipment is suspected to be contaminated and can be cleaned, follow CDC's [cleaning and disinfection](#) recommendations.
- First, clean dirty surfaces with soap and water.
- Second, disinfect surfaces using products that meet [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) criteria](#) for use against SARS-CoV-2 and are appropriate for the surface.
- If machinery or equipment is suspected to be contaminated and cannot be cleaned, it can be isolated. Isolate papers or any soft (porous) surfaces for a minimum of 24 hours before handling. After 24 hours, remove soft materials from the area and clean the hard (non-porous) surfaces per the cleaning and disinfection recommendations. Isolate hard (non-porous) surfaces that cannot be cleaned and disinfected for a minimum of seven days before handling.

Business travel

- Consider stopping or postponing all nonessential travel.
- Check the [CDC Traveler's Health Notices for the latest guidance, travel advisories, and recommendations](#).
- Advise employees to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 before travel and cancel if they become sick.
- Ensure employees who become sick while traveling or on temporary assignment understand that they should notify their supervisor and promptly call a health care provider for advice if needed.
- If outside the U.S., sick employees should follow company policy for obtaining medical care or contact a health care provider or overseas medical assistance company to assist them with finding an appropriate health care provider in that country. A U.S. consular officer may be able to help locate health care services.



Other best practices

- Assess leave policies for quarantined/isolated workers and workers caring for sick family members.
 - Employers that do not currently offer sick leave to some or all of their employees may want to draft non-punitive “emergency sick 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.
 - Employers should not require sick employees to provide a COVID-19 test result or a health care provider’s note to validate their illness, qualify for sick leave, or to return to work. Health care provider offices and medical facilities may not be able to provide this documentation in a timely manner.
- Monitor COVID-19 procedures and concerns.
 - Consider designating an employee on each shift to monitor procedures.
 - Consider designating a person who is responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. Employees should know who this person is and how to contact them.
- Determine how you will operate if absenteeism spikes.
 - Develop plans to continue your essential business functions in case you experience higher-than-usual absenteeism.
 - Prepare to institute flexible workplace and leave policies.
 - Cross-train employees to perform essential functions so the workplace can operate even if key employees are absent.

Reopening your business

Remember, best business practices may change over time, so periodically check CDC/OSHA and other resources for guidance and best practices updates.

Protect vulnerable employees

Activate your strategies and policies (see the “How can I get ready for return?” section) to protect older workers and people with serious medical conditions.

Inform and educate workers and customers

- Implement your strategies, training and policies to let workers and customers know what to expect.
- Employees should follow their employer’s policies and procedures.
- Connect employees to employee assistance program resources, if available, and community resources as needed. The Iowa COVID-19 hotline (211) and [coronavirus.iowa.gov](https://www.coronavirus.iowa.gov) are ways to connect to community resources.



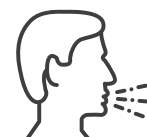
PROTECT



WASH OFTEN



DISINFECT



CAUTION

Identify and isolate newly ill persons

One of my employees appears to have COVID-19 symptoms. What do I do?

- Do NOT allow symptomatic people to work. Send them home if they arrive at work. Do not allow them to return until they meet one of the [CDC strategies](#) to discontinue isolation and have consulted with a health care provider or health department.
- If an employee is sick, refer to the [CDC guidance on what to do if sick](#).
- If multiple employees are sick, refer to the [CDC guidance on community exposure](#).
- The CDC also offers guidance for [employees with essential function operations](#).
- Cooperate fully with any state or local health department contact tracing efforts. The health of your workers and their families may be at risk.



What should I do at my workplace if an employee is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19?

- In most cases, you do not need to shut down your facility. Close off any areas used for prolonged periods of time by the sick person. Use CDC cleaning and disinfection recommendations if an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and has used the facility in the last six days. Disinfection is not necessary if it has been more than seven days since the person with suspected/confirmed COVID-19 visited or used the facility.
- Wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting to minimize the potential exposure. If waiting 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
- During this waiting period, open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in these areas.
- Clean dirty surfaces with soap and water before disinfecting them.
- To disinfect surfaces, use products that meet [EPA criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2](#) and are appropriate for the surface.
- Always wear gloves and protective clothing appropriate for the chemicals being used when you are cleaning and disinfecting.
- When should an employee suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 return to work?
- Sick employees should follow the CDC-recommended steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Employees should not return to work until they meet one of the CDC strategies to discontinue home isolation and have consulted with a health care provider and state or local health department. These strategies may change, so check the CDC's website frequently for updates.

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What do I do about potentially exposed or unexposed workers after a worker becomes sick with COVID-19?

- In addition to cleaning and disinfecting, employers should consult the [CDC guidance on community exposure](#) for the appropriate management of potentially exposed employees.
- If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, employers should inform employees of their possible exposure but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Exposed employees who do not have symptoms should remain at home or in a comparable setting and practice social distancing for 14 days.
- Employees not considered exposed by public health should self-monitor for symptoms. If they develop symptoms, they should notify their supervisor and stay home.

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RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Iowa OSHA information, including COVID-19 guidance

www.iowaosha.gov/iowa-osha

CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

CDC Guide to Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

OSHA's COVID-19 Safety and Health Topic Page

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>

OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

CDC Guide to Prepare your Small Business and Employees for the Effects of COVID-19

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/guidance-small-business.pdf>

Workplace safety and health information (with many materials also in Spanish), including recommended PPE for over 1,600 workplace chemicals, is available through the New Jersey Right to Know Hazardous Substance Fact Sheets Program

<https://web.doh.state.nj.us/rtkhsfs/indexfs.aspx>

OSHA's Personal Protective Equipment Standard www.osha.gov and Hazard Communication

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

CDC General Business FAQ

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html>

Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) COVID-19 Information

<https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus>

IDPH Guide to Business and Organizations

<https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus/Business-and-Organizations>

Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA) COVID-19 Guidance on Operations

<https://dia.iowa.gov/about/novel-coronavirus-covid-19>

Greater Des Moines Partnership COVID-19 Rapid Response Hub

<https://www.dsmpartnership.com/covid-19>

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