

# COVID-19 Back-to-Work Checklist

Updated June 26, 2020

# COVID-19 BACK-TO-WORK CHECKLIST

As you work toward a phased re-entry of your employees to the workplace during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, here are some best practice cleaning guidelines that you can use in your owned facilities and that you can use to talk with your landlord or building manager about for any commercial space you occupy.

## Supplies for Reopening

The South Carolina Department of Administration is working with the South Carolina Emergency Management Division and the State Fiscal Accountability Authority to centrally procure Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for state employees. Agency HR Directors have been provided with a link to a web form to identify their needs. Supply orders will be distributed to agencies based on the number of individuals returning to worksites at each phase.

## Staying Safe at Work

We must all do our part to protect our personal health and safety, as well as the health and safety of others, both at work and outside of work.

**A. Wearing a Cloth Mask:** All employees are strongly encouraged to wear cloth face coverings on the jobsite or in the worksite. Face coverings are not PPE but providing information on hygienic use of face coverings is recommended. Wearing a cloth mask is meant to protect other people in case you are infected. Also note, wearing a mask is not a substitute for social distancing. Cloth masks are being procured centrally and will be distributed based on need. Employees have the option to wear their own mask or cloth face covering, provided it covers the nose and mouth fully. It is the responsibility of supervisors to ensure that masks do not display images that are inappropriate for the worksite. When in the worksite, masks or cloth face coverings:

- Should be worn when in a vehicle with another individual and when using drive-through services.
- Should always be worn around others, even if social distancing can be maintained.
- May be removed if it impedes vision, if an employee has a medical condition, or if it would create an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task.
- May be removed to eat or drink during breaks and lunch periods, however, at those times, social distancing should be practiced.
- May be removed when driving alone or when isolated in a personal office.
- Should be worn by employees when conducting business at the worksites of other entities.
- Before putting on a mask, clean hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer or soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

- Make sure the mask fits snugly around the mouth and nose; if the mask has a metal wire, it should fit snugly to the bridge of the nose.
- Avoid touching the mask while wearing it.
- Cloth masks should be washed frequently. Disposable face masks should be discarded daily or more frequently if soiled.
- If individuals have personal access to disposable face masks (also called surgical masks or ear-loop masks), they should be allowed to wear them since they are more protective than cloth ones.
- A mask should not be worn if it is damp or when wet from saliva or mucus or when visibly soiled.
- Remove the mask from behind or by the ear loops, being careful not to touch the front.
- Immediately wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after removing the mask.

**B. Gloves:** Gloves should be provided to employees who require them to perform certain job functions, such as handling mail, custodial work, certain trades and groundskeeping. For the vast majority of employees, gloves should not be used for general protective use for the following reasons:

- Touching your face with contaminated hands, whether gloved or not, poses a significant risk of infection.
- Gloves often create a false sense of security for the individuals wearing them; people are more likely to touch contaminated surfaces because they feel protected from the virus.
- When wearing gloves, people are less inclined to wash their hands, even though handwashing is the number-one defense against any virus.
- Proper removal of gloves takes training. If contaminated gloves are not removed properly, employees are exposed to greater risk.

**C. Social Distancing Between Floors:** Employees who are physically able are encouraged to use the stairwells. If the facility has more than one stairwell, consider designating one for ascending and one for descending to minimize employees crossing paths in close proximity to one another. If they must use the elevator, no more than three individuals should be in an elevator at one time. If using the elevator, employees should wear a mask or face covering and avoid touching the elevator buttons with exposed hand/fingers, if possible. Wash hands or use hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol upon departing the elevator. This may vary depending on the size of the elevator and employees are encouraged to use their discretion to maintain social distancing. Posters can be used to encourage use of stairs. For leased buildings, please check with your building manager before posting.

**D. Maintaining Social Distancing in Common Areas:** Agencies should assess open work environments and meeting rooms to institute measures to physically separate and increase distance between employees, other coworkers and customers, such as:

- Place visual cues such as floor decals, colored tape or signs to indicate to customers where they should stand while waiting in line.
- Place one-way directional signage for large open work spaces with multiple through-ways to increase distance between employees moving through the space. Sample one way signs will be provided on Admin's website.
- Consider designating specific stairways for up or down traffic if building space allows.

**E. Employee Responsibilities:** Employees should be strongly encouraged to disinfect their own workspace multiple times a day, giving special attention to frequently touched surfaces, such as computer keyboards, phones, door handles and desktops. Admin is procuring disinfectant wipes for employee use, but diluted bleach solution (5 tablespoons, or 1/3 cup, bleach per gallon of water or 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water) or soap and water are also effective. For electronics, if using a spray disinfectant, it should be applied to a paper towel or cloth prior to use. Employees should be reminded to avoid touching their faces and to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water or use hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol several times during their shift to reduce the risk of potential person-to-person infections. Employees at worksites that serve the public should be permitted reasonable time each hour to wash their hands.

**F. Social Distancing in Restrooms:** Social distancing guidelines for restroom breaks include the following:

- Occupy alternate urinals and restroom stalls to maintain separation of 6 feet.
- Avoid congregating in the restroom. Be courteous and aware of others' need to use the restroom.
- To the extent possible, do not touch doorknobs, faucets, paper towel dispensers, etc. with clean, bare hands. See the CDC guidance on handwashing for proper precautions and hand washing techniques when using the restroom.

**G. Break Rooms:** Employee breaks and meal periods should be staggered when operationally feasible to limit the number of employees in communal spaces at one time. If you are eating in your work environment (break room, office, etc.), maintain 6 feet distance between you and others. Individuals should not sit facing one another. Only remove your mask or face covering in order to eat, then put it back on. Departments should remove or rearrange chairs and tables or add visual cue marks in employee break rooms to support social distancing practices between employees. Wipe all surfaces, including tables, refrigerator handles, the coffee machine, etc. after using in common areas.

**H. Smoking Areas:** Employees should smoke in designated smoking areas and limit the number of smokers in any specific area at one time to ensure social distancing. Agencies may consider scheduling smoke breaks to encourage social distancing and/or designating additional space as an approved smoking area.

**I. Building Management:** Owners and landlords/building managers should follow specific recommendations for workplace cleaning. You are encouraged to use these guidelines in your own buildings and to talk with your landlord/building manager to ensure they too are taking the appropriate steps to protect employees in the workplace.

- Increased cleaning focus on high-touch surfaces in common areas, such as door handles, handle plates and push/panic bars, water fountains, elevator call buttons, light switches, restroom dispensers, flush handles, doors, partitions, trash containers, stair rails, refrigerator and microwave handles, cabinet and sink hardware, countertops, and tables. It is recommended that these surfaces be wiped down at least three times per day and between any shift changes. Spraying surfaces with disinfectant only is not as effective as wiping down surfaces with disinfectant.
- Using disinfectants approved by the CDC for COVID-19 which can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>.
- Disinfecting coils in building air handlers.
- Using high-efficiency HVAC filters to reduce airborne contaminants.
- Monitoring building humidity setpoints to maintain a 40-60 percent range.
- Increasing fresh air intake into the building.
- Increasing ventilation air exchange rates.
- Requiring custodial and facilities workers to wear masks when entering tenant spaces.
- Limiting elevator usage to no more than three people at a time.
- Periodic fogging or electrostatic cleaning of the building. It is recommended that this type of disinfecting takes place when an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 has been in the workplace while it is believed he or she was contagious. It is also recommended that fogging or electrostatic cleaning occur following events where significant numbers of individuals were present in an indoor environment, even if social distancing was practiced (e.g. a board meeting or training).
- Placing sanitizing stations in main lobby areas.
- Placing trash cans near bathroom exits to allow for touch free exit. Remove lids from trash cans throughout the building or use ones with lids that are opened with a foot pedal.
- Adding social distancing signs.
- Vacuuming when employees are not in the workplace.