



## INTERIM GUIDANCE FOR OFFICE-BASED WORK DURING THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

**When you have read this document, you can affirm at the bottom.**

As of May 28, 2020

### Purpose

This Interim Guidance for Office-Based Work during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency ("Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Office-Based Work") was created to provide businesses and entities that operate in office spaces and their employees and contractors with precautions to help protect against the spread of COVID-19 as their businesses reopen or continue to operate.

This guidance addresses business activities where the core function takes place within an office setting. This guidance may apply – but is not limited – to businesses and entities in the following sectors: Professional services, nonprofit, technology, administrative support, and higher education administration (excluding full campus reopening). Please note that these guidelines may also apply to business operating parts of their business functions under different guidelines (e.g. front office for a construction company). This guidance does not address medical offices, such as doctors' offices or dentists' offices. This guidance also does not address building owners/managers and their employees or contractors. For more information on building management, see, "Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Commercial Building Management."

These guidelines are minimum requirements only and any employer is free to provide additional precautions or increased restrictions. These guidelines are based on the best-known public health practices at the time of Phase II of the State's reopening, and the documentation upon which these guidelines are based can and does change frequently. The Responsible Parties – as defined below – are accountable for adhering to all local, state and federal requirements relative to office-based work activities. The Responsible Parties are also accountable for staying current with any updates to these requirements, as well as incorporating same into any office-based work activities and/or Site Safety Plan.

### Background

On March 7, 2020, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo issued [Executive Order 202](#), declaring a state of emergency in response to COVID-19. Community transmission of COVID-19 has occurred throughout New York. To minimize further spread, social distancing of at least six feet must be maintained between individuals, where possible.

On March 20, 2020, Governor Cuomo issued [Executive Order 202.6](#), directing all non-essential businesses to close in-office personnel functions. Essential businesses, as defined by Empire State Development Corporation (ESD) [guidance](#), were not subject to the in-person restriction, but were, however, directed to comply with the guidance and directives for maintaining a clean and safe work environment issued by the New York State Department of Health (DOH), and were strongly urged to maintain social distancing measures to the extent possible.

On April 12, 2020, Governor Cuomo issued [Executive Order 202.16](#), directing essential businesses to provide employees, who are present in the workplace, with a face covering, at no-cost, that must be used when in direct contact with customers or members of the public during the course of their work. On April 15, 2020, Governor Cuomo issued [Executive Order 202.17](#), directing that any individual who is over age two and able to medically tolerate a face-covering must cover their nose and mouth with a mask or cloth face-covering when in a public place and unable to maintain, or when not maintaining, social distance. On April 16, 2020, Governor Cuomo issued [Executive Order 202.18](#), directing that everyone using public or private transportation carriers or other for-hire vehicles, who is over age two and able to medically tolerate a face covering, must wear a mask or face covering over the nose and mouth during any such trip. It also directed any operators or drivers of public or private transport to wear a face covering or mask which covers the nose and mouth while there are any passengers in such a vehicle.

On April 26, 2020, Governor Cuomo announced a phased approach to reopen industries and businesses in New York in phases based upon a data-driven, regional analysis. On May 4, 2020, the Governor provided that the regional analysis would consider several public health factors, including new COVID-19 infections, as well as health care system, diagnostic testing, and contact tracing capacity. On May 11, 2020, Governor Cuomo announced that the first phase of reopening would begin on May 15, 2020 in several regions of New York, based upon available regional metrics and indicators.

In addition to the following standards, both essential and non-essential businesses must continue to comply with the guidance and directives for maintaining clean and safe work environments issued by DOH.

Please note that where guidance in this document differs from other guidance documents issued by New York State, the more recent guidance shall apply.

### **Standards for Responsible Office-Based Work Activities in New York State**

No office-based work activities can operate without meeting the following minimum State standards, as well as applicable federal requirements, including but not limited to such minimum standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and United States Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The State standards apply to all office-based work activities (essential and non-essential) in operation during the COVID-19 public health emergency until rescinded or amended by the State.

The State standards contained within this guidance apply to all office-based work activity – both essential and non-essential – in operation during the COVID-19 public health emergency until rescinded or amended by the State. The owner/operator of the business with office-based functions, or another party as may be designated by the owner/operator (in either case, "the Responsible Parties"), shall be responsible for meeting these standards. The designated party can be an individual or group of individuals responsible for the operations of individual office locations/spaces. The building owner, or their designee, shall be primarily responsible for meeting standards with respect to any unleased or common areas, and the tenant, if not the owner, shall be primarily responsible for meeting these standards with respect to their leased space(s), unless the tenant and building owner reach an alternate agreement in regard to such responsibilities (e.g. joint screening protocol). Note that the following guidance specifically addresses tenants occupying office space and their employees, contractors, and visitors. Responsible Parties for the entities occupying office spaces should coordinate with building owners/managers, where applicable, on the implementation of practices in accordance with this guidance.

Note that, except where noted otherwise, references made to “employees” are to the office-based businesses/tenants and their employees and/or contractors. Responsible Parties should coordinate with building managers, where applicable, on the implementation of practices in accordance with this guidance. For more information on building managers and their employees, see “Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Commercial Building Management.”

The following guidance is organized around three distinct categories: people, places, and processes.

## I. PEOPLE

### A. Physical Distancing

- Office-based work can be safely conducted by limiting the number of occupants at any given time to 50% of the maximum occupancy for a particular area as set by the certificate of occupancy. Where applicable, Responsible Parties should work with building owners/managers to maintain capacity limits; and
- Responsible Parties must ensure that a distance of at least six feet is maintained among individuals at all times, unless safety of the core activity requires a shorter distance. Any time individuals must come within six feet of another person, acceptable face coverings must be worn. Individuals must be prepared to don a face covering if another person unexpectedly comes within six feet.
  - Acceptable face coverings for COVID-19 include but are not limited to cloth-based face coverings and disposable masks that cover both the mouth and nose.
  - However, cloth, disposable, or other homemade face coverings are not acceptable face coverings for workplace activities that typically require a higher degree of protection for personal protective equipment (PPE) due to the nature of the work. For those activities, N95 respirators or other PPE used under existing industry standards should continue to be used, as is defined in accordance with [OSHA guidelines](#).
  - Responsible Parties should consider closing any common indoor or outdoor seating areas (e.g. reception areas) within their office space. To the extent that such spaces remain open, Responsible Parties must modify seating areas arrangements (e.g. chairs, tables) to ensure that individuals are at least six feet apart in all directions (e.g. side-to-side and when facing one another).
- Responsible Parties may modify or reconfigure the use and/or restrict the number of workstations, employee seating areas, and desks, so that employees are at least six feet apart in all directions (e.g. side-to-side and when facing one another) and are not sharing workstations without cleaning and disinfection between use. When distancing is not feasible between workstations, Responsible Parties must provide and require the use of face coverings or physical barriers (e.g. plastic shielding walls, in lieu of face coverings in areas where they would not affect air flow, heating, cooling or ventilation).
  - Physical barriers should be put in place in accordance with [OSHA guidelines](#).
  - Physical barrier options may include: strip curtains, cubicle walls, plexiglass or similar materials, or other impermeable dividers or partitions.
- Responsible Parties should consider implementing strict clean-desk policies, so that non-essential items are stored in enclosed cabinets or drawers, rather than on desks.
- Responsible Parties should limit the use of shared workstations (e.g. “hot-desks”), to the extent practicable. To the extent that such workstations remain in use, they must be cleaned and disinfected between users.

- Responsible Parties should prohibit the use of small spaces (e.g. elevators, supply rooms, personal offices, vehicles) by more than one individual at a time, unless all individuals in such space at the same time are wearing acceptable face coverings. However, even when face coverings in use, occupancy must never exceed 50% of the maximum capacity of the space or vehicle, unless it is designed for use by a single occupant. Responsible Parties should increase ventilation with outdoor air to the greatest extent possible (e.g., opening windows and doors in individual office rooms), while maintaining safety protocols. Responsible Parties should take additional measures to prevent congregation in elevator waiting areas and limit density in elevators, by enabling the use of stairs.
  - Responsible Parties may leverage technology, such as room sensors and real-time dashboards, to quantify and display utilization of spaces throughout the office.
  - Responsible Parties must restrict access to areas that have reached maximum capacity under distancing guidelines.
- Responsible Parties should put in place measures to reduce bi-directional foot traffic using tape or signs with arrows in narrow aisles, hallways, or spaces, and post signage and distance markers denoting spaces of six feet in all commonly used areas and any areas in which lines are commonly formed or people may congregate (e.g. copy rooms, kitchens, reception desks, health screening stations).
  - Responsible Parties should mark six feet distance circles around workstations and other common stationary work areas.
- Responsible Parties must post signs throughout the office, consistent with DOH COVID-19 signage. Responsible Parties can develop their own customized signage specific to their workplace or setting, provided that such signage is consistent with the Department's signage. Signage should be used to remind individuals to:
  - Cover their nose and mouth with a mask or cloth face-covering when six feet of social distance cannot be maintained.
  - Properly store and, when necessary, discard PPE.
  - Adhere to physical distancing instructions.
  - Report symptoms of or exposure to COVID-19, and how they should do so.
  - Follow hand hygiene and cleaning and disinfection guidelines.

## B. Gatherings in Enclosed Spaces

- Responsible Parties must limit in-person gatherings (e.g. meetings, conferences) to the greatest extent possible and use other methods such as video or teleconferencing whenever possible, per CDC guidance "[Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)". When videoconferencing or teleconferencing is not possible, Responsible Parties should hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces and ensure that individuals maintain six feet of social distance between one another (e.g. if there are chairs, leave space between chairs, have employees sit in alternating chairs). Responsible Parties may implement the following practices to limit in-person gatherings and to enforce appropriate social distancing measures when meetings are held:
  - Add desks to spaces previously used for group gathering (e.g. meeting spaces, conference rooms).

- Mark tables in meeting rooms with appropriate distance markers.
- Responsible Parties should close non-essential amenities and communal areas which promote gathering or are high-touch (e.g. vending machines, communal coffee machines).
- Responsible Parties must put in place practices for adequate social distancing in small areas, such as restrooms and breakrooms, and should develop signage and systems (e.g. flagging when occupied) to restrict occupancy when social distancing cannot be maintained in such areas.
- Responsible Parties should stagger schedules for employees to observe social distancing for any gathering (e.g. coffee breaks, meals, and shift starts/stops).
- If required, employees that don't need to be in the office may be allowed to collect documents from their place of work on a case-by-case basis, but such collection should occur minimally, not with frequency.
- Non-essential common areas (e.g. gyms, pools, game rooms) must remain closed.

### **C. Workplace Activity**

- Responsible Parties must take measures to reduce interpersonal contact and congregation, through methods such as:
  - limiting in-person presence to only those staff who are necessary to be in the office;
  - adjusting workplace hours;
  - reducing in-office workforce to accommodate social distancing guidelines;
  - shifting design (e.g. A/B teams, staggered arrival/departure times to reduce congestion in lobbies and elevators); and/or
  - avoiding multiple teams working in one area by staggering scheduled tasks and using signs to indicate occupied areas.
- Responsible Parties should create policies which encourage employees to work from home when feasible. Responsible Parties may choose to develop return-to-office tiers or waves for employees based on factors such as function, safe transportation, and ability to work remotely, as noted in Section II "People," Subsection C "Phased Reopening."
- Responsible Parties may choose to implement best practices for employees to successfully work from home, such as:
  - Conducting regular surveys of employees to determine what practices are working and what can be improved;
  - Providing tips and tricks for employees to enhance remote work sustainability;
  - Allowing for employees to set morning and evening boundaries and taking regular breaks throughout the day;
  - Informing employees of the resources they have readily available.

### **D. Movement and Commerce**

- Responsible Parties should consider limiting all non-essential travel.
- Responsible Parties must establish designated areas for pickups and deliveries, limiting contact to the extent possible.

- Responsible Parties should limit on-site interactions (e.g. designate an egress for employees leaving their shifts and a separate ingress for employees starting their shifts) and movements (e.g. employees should remain near their workstations as often as possible).

## **II. PLACES**

### **A. Protective Equipment**

- In addition to the necessary PPE as required for certain workplace activities, Responsible Parties must procure, fashion, or otherwise obtain acceptable face coverings and provide such coverings to their employees while at work at no cost to the employee. Responsible Parties should have an adequate supply of face coverings, masks and other required PPE on hand should an employee need a replacement, or should a visitor be in need. Acceptable face coverings include, but are not limited to, cloth (e.g. homemade sewn, quick cut, bandana), surgical masks, and face shields.
- Face coverings must be cleaned or replaced after use and may not be shared. Please consult [CDC guidance](#) for additional information on cloth face coverings and other types of PPE, as well as instructions on use and cleaning.
  - Note that cloth face coverings or disposable masks shall not be considered acceptable face coverings for workplace activities that require a higher degree of protection for face covering requirements. For example, if N95 respirators are traditionally required for specific activities, a cloth or homemade mask would not suffice. Responsible Parties must adhere to OSHA standards for such safety equipment.
- Responsible Parties must allow employees to use their own acceptable face coverings but cannot require employees to supply their own face coverings. Further, this guidance shall not prevent employees from wearing their personally owned additional protective coverings (e.g. surgical masks, N95 respirators, or face shields), or if the Responsible Parties otherwise requires employees to wear more protective PPE due to the nature of their work. Employers should comply with all applicable OSHA standards.
- Responsible Parties must train employees on how to adequately put on, take off, clean (as applicable), and discard PPE, including but not limited to, appropriate face coverings. Such training should be extended to contractors if the Responsible Parties will be supplying the contractors with PPE.
- Responsible Parties must advise employees and visitors to wear face coverings in common areas including elevators, lobbies, and when traveling around the office.
- Responsible Parties must put in place measures to limit the sharing of objects, such as laptops, notebooks, touchscreens, and writing utensils, as well as the touching of shared surfaces, such as conference tables; or, require employees to perform hand hygiene before and after contact.

### **B. Hygiene, Cleaning and Disinfection**

- Responsible Parties must ensure adherence to hygiene and cleaning and disinfection requirements as advised by the CDC and DOH, including ["Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public and Private Facilities for COVID-19,"](#) and the ["STOP THE SPREAD"](#) poster, as applicable. Responsible Parties must maintain logs that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection.

- Responsible Parties must provide and maintain hand hygiene stations on in the office, as follows:
  - For handwashing: soap, running warm water, disposable paper towels, and a lined garbage can.
  - For hand sanitizing: an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol for areas where handwashing facilities may not be available or practical.
  - Make hand sanitizer available throughout common areas in the office. It should be placed in convenient locations, such as at entrances, exits, and reception desks. Touch-free hand sanitizer dispensers should be installed where possible.
    - Responsible Parties should place signage near hand sanitizer stations indicating that visibly soiled hands should be washed with soap and water; hand sanitizer is not effective on visibly soiled hands.
  - Place receptacles around the building for disposal of soiled items, including PPE.
- Responsible Parties must provide appropriate cleaning/disinfection supplies for shared and frequently touched surfaces and encourage their employees (or cleaning staffs) to use these supplies following manufacturer's instructions for use before and after use of these surfaces, followed by hand hygiene.
  - To reduce high-touch surfaces, Responsible Parties should install touch-free amenities such as water fountains, trash-cans, and hand-dryers.
- Responsible Parties must conduct regular cleaning and disinfection of the building and more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high risk areas used by many individuals and for frequently touched surfaces. Cleaning and disinfection must be rigorous and ongoing and should occur at least after each shift, daily, or more frequently as needed. Please refer to DOH's "[Interim Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public and Private Facilities for COVID-19](#)" for detailed instructions on how to clean and disinfect facilities.
  - Responsible Parties must ensure regular cleaning and disinfecting of restrooms. Restrooms should be cleaned and disinfected more often depending on frequency of use.
    - Responsible Parties must ensure distancing rules are adhered to by using signage, occupied markers, or other methods to reduce restroom capacity where feasible.
  - Responsible Parties must ensure that materials and tools are regularly cleaned and disinfected using registered disinfectants, including at least as often as employees or visitors change workstations or move to a new set of materials. Refer to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) [list of products](#) registered in New York State and identified by the EPA as effective against COVID-19.
  - If cleaning or disinfection products or the act of cleaning and disinfecting causes safety hazards or degrades the material or machinery, Responsible Parties must put in place hand hygiene stations between use and/or supply disposable gloves and/or limitations on the number of employees using such machinery.
  - Responsible Parties must provide for the cleaning and disinfection of exposed areas in the event an individual is confirmed to have COVID-19, with such cleaning and disinfection to include, at a minimum, all heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces (e.g. touchscreens, printers, keypads, telephones, hand rails, door handles).
- CDC guidelines on "[Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#)" if someone is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 are as follows:
  - Close off areas used by the person who is sick suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19.

- Responsible Parties do not necessarily need to close operations, if they can close off the affected areas.
- Shared building spaces used by the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 (e.g. elevators, lobbies, building entrances) must also be shut down and cleaned and disinfected in coordination with the building manager (For more information, see, "Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Commercial Building Management").
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
- Wait 24 hours before you clean or and disinfect. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 who is sick, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, and shared equipment.
- Once the area has been appropriately cleaned and disinfected, it can be reopened for use.
  - Employees without close contact with the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 can return to the work area immediately after cleaning and disinfection.
  - Per CDC contact tracing [guidance](#), close contact is defined as being within six feet for at least 15 minutes. When the extent of contact with the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 is not clear, the local health department should be consulted for guidance. Persons who have had close contact will undergo a 14-day quarantine.
- If more than seven days have passed since the person who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary, but routine cleaning and disinfection should continue.
- Responsible Parties must prohibit shared food and beverages (e.g. buffet style meals), encourage bringing lunch from home, and reserve adequate space for employees to observe social distancing while eating meals.

### **C. Phased Reopening**

- Responsible Parties are encouraged to phase-in reopening activities so as to allow for operational issues to be resolved before production or work activities return to normal levels. Responsible Parties should consider limiting the number of employees, hours, and number of customers available to be served when first reopening so as to provide operations with the ability to adjust to the changes.

### **D. Communications Plan**

- Responsible Parties must affirm that they have reviewed and understand the state-issued industry guidelines, and that they will implement them.
- Responsible Parties should develop a communications plan for employees and visitors, and customers that includes applicable instructions, training, signage, and a consistent means to provide employees with information. Responsible Parties should work with building management to help facilitate any building-wide communications. Responsible Parties may consider developing webpages, text and email groups, and social media.
- Responsible Parties should encourage customers to adhere to CDC and DOH guidance regarding the use of PPE, specifically face coverings when a social distance of six feet cannot be maintained, through verbal communication and signage.

- Responsible Parties should post signage inside and outside of the retail location to remind personnel and customers to adhere to proper hygiene, social distancing rules, appropriate use of PPE, and cleaning and disinfecting protocols.
- Responsible Parties should provide building managers/owners a list of essential visitors expected to enter the building.

## III. PROCESSES

### A. Screening and Testing

- Responsible Parties must implement mandatory daily health screening practices of their employees and, where practicable, visitors, but such screening shall not be mandated for delivery personnel.
  - Screening practices may be performed remotely (e.g. by telephone or electronic survey), before the employee or visitor reports to the office, to the extent possible; or may be performed on site.
  - Screening should be coordinated to prevent employees or visitors from intermingling in close contact with each other prior to completion of the screening.
  - At a minimum, screening is required for all employees or visitors and completed using a questionnaire that determines whether the employee has:
    - (a) knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19;
    - (b) tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days; and/or
    - (c) has experienced any symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
- Responsible Parties should coordinate with building managers to facilitate screening. Responsible Parties are responsible for screening their own employees and visitors, unless Responsible Parties and building management have agreed to an alternate arrangement to ensure screening is in effect. Screening best practices include:
  - If space and building configuration allows, screen individuals at or near the building entrance to minimize the impact in case of an individual suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19;
  - Allow for adequate social distancing while individuals queue for screening and/or building entry;
  - Coordinate with building managers to identify individuals who have completed a remote screening;
  - Use contactless thermal cameras in building entrances, in coordination with building management, to identify potentially symptomatic visitors and direct them to a secondary screening area to complete a follow-on screening.
- According to the CDC guidance on "[Symptoms of Coronavirus](#)," people with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported, ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms of COVID-19 include, but are not limited to: cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell.

- Responsible Parties should require employees to immediately disclose if and when their responses to any of the aforementioned questions changes, such as if they begin to experience symptoms, including during or outside of work hours.
  - In addition to the screening questionnaire, daily temperature checks may also be conducted per U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or DOH guidelines. Responsible Parties are prohibited from keeping records of employee health data (e.g. temperature data).
- Responsible Parties must ensure that any personnel performing screening activities, including temperature checks, are appropriately protected from exposure to potentially infectious employees or visitors entering the office. Personnel performing screening activities should be trained by employer-identified individuals who are familiar with CDC, DOH, and OSHA protocols.
- Screeners should be provided and use PPE, including at a minimum, a face mask, and may include gloves, a gown, and/or a face shield.
- An employee who screens positive for COVID-19 symptoms should not be allowed to enter the office and should be sent home with instructions to contact their healthcare provider for assessment and testing. Responsible Parties must immediately notify the local health department about any positive case. Responsible Parties should provide the employee with information on healthcare and testing resources.
- An employee who has responded that they have had close contact with a person who is confirmed or suspected of having COVID-19 may not be allowed to enter the site without abiding by the precautions outlined below and the Responsible Parties has documented the employee's or visitor's adherence to those precautions.
- Responsible Parties must review all employee and visitor responses collected by the screening process on a daily basis and maintain a record of such review. Responsible Parties must also identify a contact as the party for employees and visitors to inform if they later are experiencing COVID-19-related symptoms, as noted in the questionnaire.
- Responsible Parties must designate a site safety monitor whose responsibilities include continuous compliance with all aspects of the site safety plan.
- To the extent possible, Responsible Parties should maintain a log of every person, including employees and visitors, who may have close contact with other individuals at the worksite or area; excluding deliveries that are performed with appropriate PPE or through contactless means. Log should contain contact information, such that all contacts may be identified, traced and notified in the event an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19. Responsible Parties must cooperate with local health department contact tracing efforts.
- Responsible Parties should designate a central point of contact, which may vary by activity, location, shift or day, responsible for receiving and attesting to having reviewed all employee questionnaires, with such contact also identified as the party for employees and visitors to inform if they later are experiencing COVID-19-related symptoms, as noted on the questionnaire.
  - When notified of a positive case of COVID-19, identified point of contact for occupying office spaces must notify the contacts for the building owner/operator of the positive cases and initiate the respective cleaning and disinfection procedures.
- Responsible Parties and employees should take the following actions related to COVID-19 symptoms and contact:

- If an employee has COVID-19 symptoms AND EITHER tests positive for COVID-19 OR did not receive a test, the individual may only return after completing at least 14 days of self-quarantine. If an employee is critical to the operation or safety of an office, the Responsible Parties may consult the local health department where the building is located and the most up-to-date CDC and DOH standards on the minimum number of days to isolate before an individual is safely able to return to work with additional precautions to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- If an employee does NOT have COVID-19 symptoms BUT tests positive for COVID-19, the individual may only return to work after completing at least 14 days of self-quarantine. If an employee or visitor is critical to the operation or safety of a site, the Responsible Parties may consult the health department where the building is located and the most up-to-date CDC and DOH standards on the minimum number of days to isolate before an individual is safely able to return to work with additional precautions to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- If an employee has had close contact with a person with COVID-19 AND is symptomatic, the individual should notify the Responsible Parties and follow the above protocol for a positive case. Even if symptoms are deemed not related to COVID-19, the individual must complete a 14-day quarantine after the contact.
- If an employee has had close contact with a person with COVID-19 AND is NOT symptomatic, the individual must complete a 14-day self-quarantine. If the employee is critical to the operation or safety of an office AND is NOT symptomatic, the employee or visitor should notify the Responsible Parties and the health department where the building is located of their need to return to work. If approved to work, the employee must remain under quarantine at all times when not at work. The individual and employer must adhere to the following practices prior to and during their work shift, which should be documented:
  - 1) The employee or visitor must take their temperature before work to confirm they do not have a fever.
  - 2) Regular monitoring: If the employee or visitor does not have a fever or symptoms, they should self-monitor under the supervision of their employer's occupational health program.
  - 3) Wear a mask: The employee or visitor should wear a face mask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after last exposure to a person with COVID-19. The employee or visitor may not share headsets or other objects used near the face.
  - 4) Social distance: The employee or visitor should continue social distancing practices, including maintaining, at least, six feet distance from others. The employee or visitor may not congregate in the break room or other crowded places.
  - 5) Clean and disinfect work spaces: Continue to clean and disinfect all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, and shared electronic equipment routinely. Increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces.
  - 6) Responsible Parties should work with facility maintenance staff to increase air exchanges in the room or building.
- If an employee is symptomatic upon arrival at work or becomes sick during the day, the employee or visitor must be separated and sent home immediately, following the above protocol for a positive case.

## B. Tracing and Tracking

- Responsible Parties must notify the local health department and DOH immediately upon being informed of any positive COVID-19 test result by an employee in their office.

- In the case of an employee or visitor testing positive, the Responsible Parties must cooperate with the local health department as required to trace all contacts in the workplace, and the local health department where the building is located must be notified of all individuals who entered the site dating back 48 hours before the employee or visitor first experienced COVID-19 symptoms or tested positive, whichever is earlier. Confidentiality must be maintained as required by federal and state law and regulations.
  - As a best practice, Responsible Parties may offer optional tracing and tracking technology (e.g. Bluetooth enabled mobile applications) to streamline contact tracing and communication process among their workforce and others.
- Responsible Parties must ensure that in the case of an employee showing symptoms while in the workplace, the building managers are immediately notified with information on where the individual has been throughout the building and notify building management if the symptomatic employee tests positive.
- Local health departments will implement monitoring and movement restrictions of infected or exposed persons including home isolation or quarantine.
- Individuals who are alerted that they have come into close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19, and have been alerted via tracing, tracking or other mechanism, are required to self-report to their employer at the time of alert and shall not be permitted to remain or return to the building until they have completed quarantine, as described above in Section III "Processes," Subsection A "Screening and Testing."

## **IV. EMPLOYER PLANS**

Responsible Parties must conspicuously post completed safety plans on site. The State has made available a business reopening safety plan template to guide business owners and operators in developing plans to protect against the spread of COVID-19.

**Additional safety information, guidelines, and resources are available at:**

New York State Department of Health Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website  
<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Occupational Safety and Health Administration COVID-19 Website  
<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>

**At the link below, affirm that you have read and understand your obligation to operate in accordance with this guidance:**

<https://forms.ny.gov/s3/ny-forward-affirmation>