



Reopening New York: A Guide for New York Human Services Organizations

Summary:

With the uncertainty of the pace of recovery from COVID-19 and the second wave of infections, we encourage nonprofits to consider the topics in this guidance to help your organizations **reopen safely during this pandemic**, including: how to search for specific reopening guidelines for your industry, office procedures, health screening tips, building maintenance and HVAC system tips, and worker protections information.

Nonprofits should regularly check the [New York Forward](#) webpage for the most **up-to-date information and criteria for reopening by region**. Those guidelines should provide you with easy-to-follow instructions for office opening procedures and more.

We remind you that employers must **screen employees for COVID-19 symptoms** every day. The NYC guidelines for health screenings can be found by [clicking here](#).

All organizations should be sure to regularly review the [building readiness guidance for different operational conditions](#) before allowing employees or clients into your space.

Finally, be sure to share [Federal](#), [State](#), and [New York City worker protection information](#) with your staff so they can work harmoniously with your leadership to protect everyone.

New York Forward:

New York State is allowing non-essential businesses to reopen on a **regional and industry-specific basis**, as each region meets the criteria necessary to protect public health. The State's plan focuses on getting New Yorkers back to work – without triggering renewed spread of the COVID-19 virus or overwhelming local hospital systems. All New York State regions are in the process of reopening in accordance with the [New York Forward](#) plan.

How to Navigate the New York Forward Plan:

- Use the [New York Forward Business Reopening Lookup Wizard](#) to help businesses determine if they are eligible to reopen.
- Visit the [New York Forward website](#) or [NYC DOHMH's website](#) to find all of the New York State guidelines for your industry.
- Read and complete the [affirmation form](#).
- Develop a [Business Reopening Safety Plan](#) and post it at **each worksite** where workers can easily see it.



Office Procedures:

As human services organizations look towards reopening physical office spaces and resuming business-as-usual, we urge you to review the list of **office procedures** (below) to ensure a safe environment for staff and clients.

Checklist of Office Procedures to Follow:

- Visit [New York Forward's statewide guidelines](#) for specific guidance for your industry.
- Conduct an [employee health screening](#) every day.
- Remind staff to monitor their health closely and stay home if sick. Staff who arrive to work sick or become sick at work should be sent home immediately.
- Provide staff with the appropriate PPE and provide replacements.
- Adhere to social distancing rules – at least 6 feet of distance between individuals!
- Provide and maintain hand hygiene stations for personnel, including handwashing with soap, water, and paper towels, as well as an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60% or more alcohol for areas where handwashing is not feasible.
- Regularly clean shared equipment and frequently touched surfaces.
- Post signs and put tape or other markers with information about COVID-19 and to show people where to stand for social distancing.

Health Screening Tips:

New York State requires employers to **screen employees for COVID-19 symptoms and exposure** before the employee can enter the workplace **each day**.

Health Screening Tips to Utilize:

- Review the [NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Screening Tool](#).
- Organizations can use the [COVID-19 Screening Tool Sample](#) in a way that makes sense for your workplace. Ideas for screening include...
 - **Call staff** before they leave home to ask the screening questions.
 - Set up an **automated phone line** that allows staff to indicate yes/no and have someone monitor the line to ensure compliance.
 - Issue an **auto-generated email or survey** that enables a response.
 - If screening from home is not feasible, **designate a screening area** and distribute the screening questions on paper to staff and visitors when they arrive to the program.
 - If written forms are used, **they should not identify the individual by name**.
- Organizations must document that they have reviewed the daily health screening assessments. Organizations can use the sample [COVID-19 Employer Health Screen Review Documentation Template](#) to help you document daily health screening assessments.
- New York State requires **regular cleaning and disinfection at least every day**, and more frequent cleaning and disinfection of shared objects (such as tools), frequently touched surfaces, and high transit



areas, such as restrooms and common areas. Organizations can use the sample [Cleaning and Disinfection Log Template](#) to show how you are complying with the requirement to clean and disinfect daily.

- [EPA: COVID-19 Disinfectants](#): Search the Environmental Protection Agency's list of approved products for disinfection.
- To report a confirmed case of COVID-19 or if you have any questions, call the Health Department at [866-692-3641](#). If the staff member is at the worksite, they should return home immediately. If they are at home, they should not come to work.
- Refer to [NYC DOHMH's Handling COVID-19 Cases in the Workplace: What Employers Need to Know](#) guidance on how you can address cases of COVID-19 in your workplace.

Building Maintenance & HVAC Systems Tips:

The [American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers Guidance on Reopening Buildings](#) has technical resources to address the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and possible future epidemics as it relates to the effects of heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems on disease transmission. [Guidance and building readiness](#) information for different operational conditions have been developed for several building types, including commercial; residential; schools and universities; and healthcare facilities. General guidance for re-opening buildings is also available.

Building Maintenance & HVAC System Checklist:

- **Systems Evaluation:** Inspect equipment, systems, and controls to check for existing issues. Evaluate outdoor air ventilation for compliance with design requirements. Make note of existing filters' MERV rating. Analyze each HVAC system for appropriate engineering controls to improve its potential to reduce virus transmission. Check calibration.
- **Inspection and Maintenance:** Verify HVAC systems function per design intent. Ensure that energy recovery devices can be operated safely.
- **Ventilation and Filtration:** Confirm systems provide required minimum amounts of outdoor air for ventilation and that the filters are MERV 13 or better filters for recirculated air. Combine the effects of outdoor air, filtration, and air cleaners to exceed combined requirements of minimum ventilation and MERV-13 filters.
- **Building Readiness Plan:** Create a plan to document the intended operation for the building, highlighting the mitigation strategies, temporary and permanent, to be implemented for the facility.
 - **Non-HVAC Strategies:** Note if face masks are required or recommended; implement social distancing, establish occupancy levels, and establish cleaning and handwashing requirements.
 - **HVAC Strategies:** Increased ventilation, improved filtration, and/or air cleaning technologies.
- **Pre- or Post-Occupancy Flush with Outdoor Air:** Focus on removing bio-burden pre-or post-occupancy of the building. Flush building for a time required to achieve three air changes of outdoor air (or equivalent, including effect of outdoor air, particulate filtration, and air cleaners).
- **Modes of Operation for the Building:** Operate in Occupied Mode when people are present in the building, including times when the building is occupied by a small fraction of its allowable capacity.
- **Water Systems:** In general, building water systems should be flushed before they are reopened. Refer to EPA Guidance on this topic [here](#).
- **Energy Savings:** During Evaluation and Inspection, determine optimized control strategies that can be implemented.



Worker Protections:

There are a number of **new worker protections related to COVID-19** that employers should be aware of. We encourage you to share these lists of protections with your staff.

Federal Protections:

- The [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) (FFCRA or Act) requires certain employers to provide employees with **paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave** for specified reasons related to COVID-19.
- Visit the [Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division's website](#) for information about paid sick leave and paid expanded family and medical leave.

New York State Protections:

- Visit the [New York Paid Family Leave website](#) for information on paid sick leave, paid family leave, COVID -19 paid leave, and disability benefits.
- If your employer does not provide the required paid sick leave, you may [file a complaint](#) with the NYS Department of Labor.

New York City Protections:

- Visit the [Department of Consumer Affairs Office of Labor Policy & Standards' website](#) for information about [NYC's Paid Safe and Sick Leave Law](#).
- **Worker Protection Hotline:** Call 311 or 1-212-436-0381 with questions about reopening, health and safety guidelines for the workplace, or to report an employer that is not following reopening requirements.

Thank you for reopening safely during COVID-19!
Please email info@humanservicescouncil.org with any questions.

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