

UNIVERSAL GUIDELINES

The State of New Hampshire provides this document to all businesses and organizations for their use in enabling all consumers and employees to engage in business and commerce as safely as possible based on current information in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, and as we seek to provide for economic recovery.

These Universal Guidelines apply to businesses and organizations that are authorized to be in operation by the State. These Guidelines must be used in conjunction with any applicable industry-specific guidelines issued by the Task Force. The combination of these Guidelines and any applicable industry-specific guidance provides the current operating guidelines for each business or organization. Nothing in this or other Task Force guidance precludes any individual or business from taking additional precautions for the health and safety of their employees and customers. These Guidelines and any applicable guidance are intended to provide a foundation upon which businesses and organizations can work creatively in assisting government efforts to reduce exposure and transmission of COVID-19.

Businesses and organizations must also be aware of and follow any applicable industry-specific guidance issued by the State. Industry-specific guidance can be found at <https://www.nheconomy.com/reopeningtaskforce>.

In addition to these Universal Guidelines, businesses and organizations should also review and follow other applicable guidance such as:

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance for businesses and employers;
- CDC employer information for office buildings;
- CDC guidance for cleaning and disinfection;
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidance on preparing workplaces for COVID-19;
- OSHA guidance on wearing cloth face coverings/masks;
- NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) guidance on employee travel and screening; and
- NH DHHS guidance on the use of cloth face coverings/masks.

As part of these Universal Guidelines, businesses and organizations should review the CDC print resources website for sample communications that they should print and post in their facilities and on their websites. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html>

Businesses, organizations, and their employees should also monitor and follow guidance issued by the CDC, as well as any applicable federal or state regulatory requirements to reduce transmission among employees and customers in order to maintain healthy business and organization operations and work environments.

Employers MUST comply with the following guidelines:

1. Prohibit all employees who are sick or not feeling well from the workplace:
 - a. Employers must require all employees who are sick or not feeling well to stay home. If employees feel ill prior to coming to work, employees must notify their supervisors by phone instead of reporting to work.
 - b. If an employee develops symptoms of COVID-19 (see below) during the day or comes into close contact with a person with COVID-19, the employee must notify his/her supervisor, be sent home immediately, and be instructed to contact his healthcare provider to seek medical advice to determine if the employee should be required to self-isolate. Surfaces in that employee's workspace must be cleaned and disinfected. Per EEOC and other pertinent guidelines, employers are required to maintain the confidentiality of employee health information under both state and federal law.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- *Fever*
- *Respiratory symptoms such as runny nose, sore throat, cough, or shortness of breath*
- *Flu-like symptoms such as muscle aches, chills, and severe fatigue*
- *Changes in a person's sense of taste or smell*

2. Prohibit all employees diagnosed with COVID-19 from the workplace:
 - a. Employers must require all employees diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home. Employers must also require employees exposed to (but not yet diagnosed with) COVID-19 to stay home.
 - b. Exceptions can be made for exposed employees who are NOT diagnosed with COVID-19 and who do not show any symptoms to return to work. However, such exceptions can only be made with approval from NH DHHS Public Health officials after certain protections have been put in place.

3. Develop a process for screening all employees reporting for work for COVID-19 related symptoms as follows:
 - a. Identify a location and assign a person(s) who will screen each employee every day before they enter the workplace. Such processes must be clearly communicated to employees. The person performing the screening must wear a cloth face covering/mask. Employees being screened must also wear a cloth face coverings/masks while being screened. See "Face Coverings" below.

 - b. The screener must ask the following questions:
 - i. Do you have any of the following symptoms of COVID-19:
 - A. Fever (feeling feverish or a documented temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher);
 - B. Respiratory symptoms such as a runny nose, nasal congestion, sore throat, cough, or shortness of breath;
 - C. Whole body symptoms such as muscle aches, chills, and severe fatigue;
 - D. Changes in your sense of taste or smell?

 - ii. Have you been in close contact with someone who is suspected or confirmed to have had COVID-19 in the past 14 days? (Note: healthcare workers caring for COVID-19 patients while wearing appropriate personal protective equipment should answer "No" to this question).

 - iii. Have you traveled in the past 14 days either:
 - A. Internationally (outside the U.S.);
 - B. By cruise ship; or
 - C. Domestically (within the U.S.) outside of NH, VT, or ME on public transportation (e.g. bus, train, plane, etc)?

 - c. Document the temperatures of all employees daily before their shifts:
 - i. Employers should take the temperatures of their employees on-site with a non-touch thermometer each day upon each employee's arrival at work.
 - ii. If this is not possible, each employee can take his/her temperature before arriving at work as long as it can be sufficiently authenticated by the employee.
 - iii. Normal temperature should not exceed 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit.

 - d. Employers must handle employees who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms or those who report a risk of exposure to COVID-19 (e.g. answers "Yes" to any of the screening questions or who are found to have a fever) as follows:

- have a face covering, the business/organization will provide one to the customer/client.
 - ii. Cloth face coverings/masks should be worn and managed according to CDC guidance about the use of cloth face coverings.
 - iii. People wearing face coverings must not touch their eyes, noses, mouths, or faces, or adjust their face coverings without first sanitizing their hands. After touching faces or adjusting face coverings, their hands must be sanitized.
- d. **Customer/client screening** must occur for all customers/clients who will be in close contact (within 6 feet) of employees to receive services.
- i. If the service is provided by reservation, the screening must occur the day before the service and it must occur again on the day of the appointment.
 - ii. If the service is provided, but no reservation was made, then the screening must occur on the day of the service..
 - iii. The following questions must be asked:
 - i. Do you have any of the following symptoms of COVID-19:
 - A. Fever (feeling feverish or a documented temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher);
 - B. Respiratory symptoms such as a runny nose, nasal congestion, sore throat, cough, or shortness of breath;
 - C. Whole body symptoms such as muscle aches, chills, and severe fatigue;
 - D. Changes in your sense of taste or smell?
 - ii. Have you been in close contact with someone who is suspected or confirmed to have had COVID-19 in the past 14 days? (Note: healthcare workers caring for COVID-19 patients while wearing appropriate personal protective equipment should answer “No” to this question).
 - iii. Have you traveled in the past 14 days either:
 - A. Internationally (outside the U.S.);
 - B. By cruise ship; or
 - C. Domestically (within the U.S.) outside of NH, VT, or ME on public transportation (e.g. bus, train, plane, etc)?
 - iv. If a customer/client answers “Yes” to any of these questions, the business or organization must be denied access to the facility and the customer/client should be informed that he/she should contact his healthcare provider to determine if the person needs to be tested and/or self-isolate. The customer/client should also be informed that he/she will not be allowed access to the business or organization’s facility until the person is cleared by his healthcare provider and/or NH DHHS DPH.
- e. **Cleaning processes** must reflect the need to keep surfaces regularly touched by employees or customers clean and sanitized. Employers must develop policies for worker protection and provide training to all staff prior to assigning cleaning tasks. Cleaning practices must follow CDC guidelines with regular sanitation of high-moderate touch surfaces at least every two hours.
- f. **Group sizes** must be limited to a maximum of 10 in all circumstances. In outdoor situations or where otherwise allowed under industry-specific guidance, multiple groups of 10 are allowed following social distance guidelines between the groups.
- g. **Work locations** should be encouraged to be remote (offsite) whenever possible, using telephone or video services to conduct meetings.
- h. **Work processes** should be modified as employers must reduce the risk to employees in the workplace. All work processes must be reviewed for possible modifications.

Consideration must be given to modifying employee schedules, where possible to reduce the number of physical interactions; reviewing how to hold meetings by conducting them by phone or computer conferencing applications when possible; and limiting in-person meetings in their frequency and only allowing them to occur when a safe distance of at least 6 feet from all participants can be maintained at all times or, if a 6 foot distance cannot be maintained throughout the meeting, then cloth face coverings/mask must be worn.

- i. **Reduce virus spread potential** by promoting etiquette for coughing, sneezing, and frequent hand hygiene. alcohol-based hand sanitizer must be provided and workplace cleaning and disinfection practices must be implemented, including, but not limited to:
 - i. Monitor employee hand washing or use of hand sanitizer and encourage frequent hand hygiene.
 - ii. If possible, provide employees and the public with tissues, no-touch trash cans, soap and water, and hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
 - iii. Limit or eliminate self-serve options such as, customer samples, communal packaging such as self-serve bagels, food/beverages (e.g. candy dishes, common creamers at coffee stations).
 - iv. Discourage workers from using other workers' tools and equipment, when possible. If not possible, establish procedures for cleaning and disinfecting tools between employee's use.
- j. **A hazard assessment** should be conducted to identify potential workplace hazards related to COVID-19. CDC guidance should be reviewed and included in reviewing workplace hazard assessments.
- k. **Building ventilation** should be evaluated to increase room and overall building ventilation, increase the number of air exchanges, increase outdoor air ventilation, limit internal air circulation, and improve central air filtration. Ventilation systems' filters must be routinely replaced and other necessary maintenance should be performed as needed. CDC guidance should be reviewed and used in evaluating building ventilation.

Employers SHOULD comply with the following guidelines:

1. Develop a plan for potential COVID-19 cases:
 - a. Consult available state and federal guidance documents to implement plans to continue essential business and organization functions in case of higher than usual absenteeism.
 - b. Employers must work with state and local officials when needed to monitor and investigate cases of COVID-19. In all cases, employers must work in a manner to ensure employees' privacy rights.
2. Remind covered employees of the provisions of the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act:
 - a. This law allows for paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons, such as for self-quarantining, seeking a medical diagnosis for COVID-19 symptoms, or caring for a child whose school or place of care is closed for reasons related to COVID-19.
 - b. Covered employers must post notice of FFCRA requirements at their workplaces. Given the number of employees who may be working remotely, employers should consider posting this information online for employees' to see.
 - c. Covered employers qualify for tax credits for qualifying wages paid under this Act.
 - d. For more information visit www.dol.gov/coronavirus.
3. Update employee illness policy:

- a. Review business and organization policies to make sure that policies and practices are consistent with public health recommendations and are consistent with existing state and federal workplace laws.
 - b. Amend or update internal policies to include symptoms of and leave for COVID-19 or create a COVID-19 specific policy. Employers should maintain flexible, non-punitive policies that permit employees to stay home if ill or to care for a sick family member. These policies should incorporate any industry-specific recommendations by the State of New Hampshire. All staff should sign the policy and the policy should be posted for employees' information.
4. Consider work options for vulnerable employees:
- a. Employees who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the CDC, either based on age or underlying health conditions should be encouraged to consider their individual risk factors and whether they are safer to work from home.
 - b. Employees should be encouraged to have these discussions with their employers to explore any options available.
 - c. Employers must prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace by not making any determinations of health risk or health status based on age, race, gender, disability, or country of origin.
 - a. 5. Communicate frequently with both employees and customers about steps being taken to prevent spread of COVID-19 in the workplace: Communications to employees:
 - Communicate expectations to employees with recommendations and requirements on steps everyone can take to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.
 - Post extensive signage on health policies, including the documents that can be found on the website included below in subsection c, in the workplace to help educate facility occupants on COVID-19 best practices.
 - b. Customer Communication
 - Communicate with customers about steps being taken to protect them from COVID-19 exposure in the facility..
 - Post extensive signage on actions customers can take to protect themselves and other facility occupants from COVID-19 exposure.
 - c. See CDC print resources website for sample communications that businesses and organizations should print and post in their facilities and on their websites - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html>

Multiple Sector Guidance

Many businesses, even those from different industries, have similar operational or facility considerations as they relate to COVID-19. In addition to these Universal Guidelines, and any applicable industry-specific guidelines, there are other multiple sector guidelines that should be followed if applicable to a business or organization, such as Pools and Company Vehicles.

Guidance that was effective prior to June 15, 2020, will be superseded by guidance effective after June 15, 2020. Guidance will be updated so each business or organization must remain up to date on the most current guidance issued by the State.

Please check frequently for additional or updated guidance – www.nheconomy.com/reopeningtaskforce