**Best Practices for Opening Worksites During the Pandemic**

During this lethal pandemic, human contact should be limited to the greatest extent possible in order to flatten the curve and avoid further loss of life. Until a vaccine is available, all human contact creates a risk of infection. When working remotely is not an option, numerous protective strategies should be implemented to reduce the risk of infection for workers, those whom workers serve, and the broader public.

* **Establish a building, labor/management COVID-19 Committee**
	+ A joint, labor/management COVID-19 committee should be established for each site.
	+ The COVID-19 Committee should be tasked with developing site-specific procedures, protocols, and related recommendations.
	+ Protocols and procedures must be consistent with collective bargaining agreements, as well as the current COVID-19 state and local requirements.
	+ The Union members of the COVID-19 Committee shall be selected by the Union and shall include representatives for all work groups/functions.
	+ The management members of the Committee shall include sufficient representation of departments and operational areas, including facility management, security, environmental services, and work groups.
	+ The COVID-19 Committee should meet prior to the re-opening of any building and on a regular scheduled basis.
	+ Minutes shall be kept of the COVID-19 Committee meetings and shall be available to all employees.
	+ The COVID-19 Committee should be co-chaired by management and the Union.
* **Reduce the number of workers at the worksite.**
	+ Working from home remains the safest option for employees at the current time because it eliminates contact with others at work who may be infected with COVID-19.
	+ Working from home options shall be negotiated between the Union and the employer.
	+ Other Options:
		- Platoon staffing (A & B shifts)
		- Staggered start times
		- Alternative Workweek Program
			* There is an issue of an extended workday
* **Provide the additional time needed to enable employees to follow COVID-19 procedures and protocols**
	+ Employees should be allowed to go to the bathroom and wash their hands with soap and water when they determine the need.
	+ Enhanced building entrance procedures and limitations on the number of people permitted in elevators, bathrooms, and common areas at a given time will take more time. Employees should be enabled to follow-all protocols and given the time it takes to do so.
	+ Wearing masks all day can be hard on many workers. Permit additional breaks for workers to go outside to get fresh air, stay hydrated, and to remove their mask as long as they can be socially distanced from others.
* **Control building access and movement within the building for visitors, vendors, contractors, and delivery personnel.**
	+ Provide a controlled, security checkpoint(s) in the lobby entrance or other appropriate entry point for all visitors to enter and register.
	+ The controlled, security checkpoint should be operated by a building security guard or public safety personnel at all times.
	+ Develop procedures for building access and other requirements, such as the use of face masks/coverings by visitors. The instructions should inform visitors that anyone who is sick or feels ill, who has had recent symptoms, or who has had a known exposure to someone who has tested positive or was presumed positive for COVID-19 should not report to the building. Provide the set of procedures and rules to visitors, preferably prior to the visit via email, when access is scheduled. Hard copies of the procedures should be on hand and can be provided during building entrance and registration for customers/clients. The procedures should be translated into the appropriate language(s) for customers/clients.
	+ Maintain a spreadsheet/database of all persons entering the building.
	+ Upon entering the building, the registration process should keep visitors socially distanced, i.e. at least 6 feet / 2 meters, from the security/public safety staff. Tape on the floor can be used to mark the area where visitors must stand during the registration process.
	+ At the beginning of the visitor registration, the visitor should be asked a set of screening questions about whether they fell sick or feel ill, and whether they have had recent symptoms, or have had a known exposure to someone who has tested positive or was presumed positive for COVID-19.
	+ The process for registration should minimize or eliminate the use of a common touch screen or writing utensil and “sign-in” log. The visitor can be asked to step forward and place their ID on the security desk, and then step back. The security/public safety personnel can then enter the registration information into the building system (or use a scanning device to photograph the ID), before placing the ID back on the desktop and instructing the visitor to retrieve their ID. The security desk should be wiped down after the ID is retrieved by the visitor with an approved product, such as a Lysol wipe.
	+ Require all vendors and contractors to submit a request for building access prior to the visit. The request for approval should be made to [name of designated personnel] and must identify the reason for needing access to the building, the date of the visit, the time of arrival, the area(s) the person or persons will need access to while on-site, and an estimate of the time for completion of the work. A process for emergency access should be developed.
	+ When possible, requests for visits or appointments by customers/clients should also be made ahead of time.
	+ All visitors should remain on-site only for as long as necessary to complete the work they came to do or tasks they needed to accomplish.
	+ Visitors should be restricted to approved areas.
	+ All visitors should be required to wear a face mask or covering which fully covers their nose and mouth when inside the building and should maintain social distancing protocol. Face masks/coverings may be provided by the agency/employer for those customers/clients who do not have their own.
	+ All visitors will be screened with a touchless thermometer to identify those with a fever. Visitors with a fever of 100.4 degrees or greater will not be allowed to access the building. Temperature screening will not identify individuals who are infected, but who are asymptomatic and do not know they are sick.
	+ An information sheet about COVID-19 symptoms, including symptoms that require emergency medical care, based on the most up-to-date CDC guidelines, should be provided. Protocols should be developed for building security/public safety personnel about when to call 911 for emergency services.
	+ Lines of communication should be established between the security/public safety desk and Point of Contacts (POC’s) for operational areas to limit the number of individuals sent to a given area based on pre-determined limits of occupancy of a waiting area and capacity based on staffing levels. The purpose of this is to avoid over-crowded waiting areas or lines.
	+ Post signage at worksites that provides a telephone number to call for assistance.
	+ Failure to abide by the building rules will void approval for access and require the visitor to vacate the premises.
	+ All visitors must exit the building prior to closing time.
* **Reduce or eliminate the number of customers/clients in spaces.**
	+ Customers/clients should ideally enter buildings by appointment only.
	+ Members of the public should wait outside or in their cars if possible.
		- When it is the client / customer’s turn, they will be called on their cell phones and as much business as possible should be conducted over the phone.
		- For customer waiting areas outside, awnings and/or open air, covered shelters should be provided to protect customers/clients from the elements. Social distancing should be maintained on all lines.
		- Only as a last resort is face-to-face interaction for business to be conducted.
* **Establish employee entrance and exit procedures.**
	+ If a hand scanner is used to clock in or if a single pen is used for sign-in purposes, consider an alternative method. Also, require hand washing before and after clocking or signing in.
	+ Install hand sanitizer stations at doorways to break rooms/bathrooms.entrances
	+ Trash receptacles for discarding gloves/wipes etc. should be placed outside at every exit.
	+ Make high touch areas such as doorways automatic or install [sanitary door openers](https://external-preview.redd.it/rACpM-n6tvWnm2_iz6U06_JZQ5JsCNzuNqlEtqB9wa0.jpg?auto=webp&s=09b9c471d7dabddaaac10e48999b63c97a1e4fb4).
	+ Temperature screen all employees according to thermometer operating manual upon entering the building. Workers will be shown their temperature. If their temperature is above the 100.4, the worker will inform their supervisor. The supervisor will arrange for the employee to get a Covid test either on the premises or at a testing facility and the employee will be sent home with pay. Workers must provide the results as soon as practical in order to either return to work or continue out on Covid medical leave.
	+ Relax lateness policy to avoid workers lining up in a rush to sign-in / clock-in.
* **Coordinate and/or restrict movement within the building**
	+ If there are multiple stairways, determine whether the stairways can be designated for use as an “up” or “down” stairway. Fire codes and emergency response procedures should be considered.
	+ If there are multiple entryway/exits, designate one as entrance and one as exit.
	+ Limit movement within the building to the extent possible, particularly from floor to floor, and only when absolutely necessary.
	+ Limit the number of people in an elevator, ideally to 1 at a time.
	+ If lines of members of the public form within the building, ensure that they are properly spaced (at least 6 feet apart).
* **Develop protocols for employees who become symptomatic.**
	+ If a worker becomes symptomatic at work, they should notify their supervisor and the supervisor should isolate them immediately and send them home.
	+ The worker should also notify their steward or their union hall of symptoms.
	+ The worker should seek testing immediately.
	+ Contract tracing should occur for any worker who tests positive.
	+ Workers in contact with positive cases should quarantine for 14 days with no loss of pay.
* **Develop protocols for employee COVID-19 illness, isolation, notification to other employees, and workplace contact tracing.**
	+ Management should notify the Union if a worker tests positive.
	+ Workers who were in close contact with a positive worker should be notified.
* **Develop security protocols.**
	+ Our members should not be the ones to enforce regulations such as social distancing, mask-wearing, etc.
	+ Managers or security guards should be responsible for regulating safety measures.
* **Develop cleaning & disinfection protocols.**
	+ Cleaning crews, whether they are contracted vendors or employees of the State need to be trained in a safe and effective way to clean worksites during the pandemic.
	+ There should be a comprehensive cleaning at the end of every work day.
	+ Surfaces that are touched regularly should be cleaned regularly throughout the day.
	+ Bathrooms should be cleaned several times a day.
	+ Fog cleaners should not be used. The residue is very difficult to remove from fabric chairs and carpeting, etc. and can cause adverse health effects or trigger symptoms of asthma. The only fog/mist approved by the EPA is Binary Ionization Technology (BIT) Solution, EPA Registration # 90150-2. This fog/mist is only for hard nonporous surfaces. In the event fog is used we want the safety data sheet.
	+ There should be a visible record of the cleaning schedule and when the last cleaning occurred in each work area/floor, rest room, break room conference room and other rooms that workers may frequent.
	+ \*\*Follow CDC guidelines
	+ Provide the SDS of the products being used in each worksite to the Union
	+ Provide gloves to janitorial and cleaning staff
* **Confirm HVAC functioning and make necessary upgrades in both owned and leased buildings.**
	+ Have a qualified vender conduct an assessment of the HVAC system to verify proper functioning and efficient operation.
	+ The qualified vendor should prepare an HVAC Assessment Report documenting the work performed and identifying any additional system balancing, upgrades, replacements or other measures recommended to improve the health, safety, and/or efficiency of the HVAC system.
	+ Install the highest rated filter, based on the HVAC system’s design, e.g. MERV 13 or 14.
	+ Maximize the amount of fresh air and minimize the amount of recycled air. This will vary by season.
	+ Install CO2 sensors in workspaces to verify that proper ventilation is maintained throughout the year
	+ Ideally, ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI) light sanitizers should be installed in the HVAC system to kill virus particles.
	+ NJ Indoor Air Quality Standard requirements
* **Provide necessary supplies, including Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).**
	+ PEOSH requires the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) to reduce employee exposure to hazards when engineering and administrative controls are not feasible or effective in reducing these exposures to acceptable levels. [*As of June 2008, the Standard explicitly states that New Jersey public employers are required to pay for the PPE necessary for compliance*](https://www.nj.gov/health/workplacehealthandsafety/documents/peosh/ppecitation.pdf)
	+ Issue several masks to each worker so that individuals always have a mask available when the other mask is being laundered. Encourage daily washing of face masks at home.
	+ Hand sanitizer containing 60% alcohol content should be provided for visitors and employees. Areas should be identified throughout the building for access to hand sanitizer.
	+ Touchless dispensers for hand sanitizer should be stationed at the entrances to the building, at the entrances to offices, and in common spaces such as a cafeteria, at a minimum.
	+ Each employee should be provided with hand sanitizer at their desk.
	+ An ample stock of all supplies including hand sanitizer should be maintained.
	+ Disposable gloves should be provided for cleaning with microbial disinfectants
* **Provide mental health services and resources.**
	+ Offer mental health services such as EAP or worker-to-worker programs and communicate to employees the availability of services.
	+ Provide information about how to access local, state, and federal programs and services, including domestic abuse, substance use/abuse and treatment, and suicide prevention.
	+ Offer online workshops for employees covering various areas of mental health through the employer EAP or other provider.
	+ Provide training and resources to management and workers about how to identify those who may be in distress, appropriate interventions, and referrals.
* **Provide testing.**
	+ Workers should be tested before coming back to work and should be tested regularly after that until there is a vaccine
	+ Provide thermometer tests for members of the public who must enter the building.
* **Provide training.**
	+ Provide adequate, usable, and appropriate training, education, and informational material about business-essential job functions and worker health and safety, including proper hygiene practices and the use of any workplace controls (including PPE).
	+ All workers should be provided training on best practices for reducing risk.
	+ NJ IAQ standard
* **Ensure physical distancing.**
	+ Spread apart the workers in an office. 6 feet apart is the bare minimum but further apart is better.
	+ Never have more than one worker at a time in a vehicle.
	+ If there is a waiting area, distance the chairs and limit the capacity.
	+ Occupancy limits should be established for all work areas as well as common spaces like cafeterias, smoking areas, etc.
* **Install barriers.**
	+ Sneeze guards or windows should be installed at public facing workspaces.
	+ Consideration of air flow should be considered so as not to create dead air spaces or impede ventilation.
	+ Install 6’ high cubicle walls.
* **Develop restroom protocols and upgrade restrooms.**
	+ Disconnect air-powered hand dryers and replace with paper towels.
	+ Limit the number of people in restrooms.
	+ There should be a visible record of the cleaning schedule and when the last cleaning occurred.
	+ Provide touchless paper towel dispensers and disable forced-air hand dryers.
	+ Bathrooms should be stocked with paper seat covers, sanitizer wipes, paper towels, (forced-air hand dryers disabled)
* **Develop Break Room protocols.**
	+ Remove excess chairs so 6 feet social distancing can be maintained. Place tape on the floor under chairs so they remain 6 feet apart.
	+ Clean the break room several times daily
	+ Provide hand wipes, hand sanitizer and paper towels in the break rooms
	+ Refrigerators, microwaves and coffeemakers cleaned daily.
	+ Signage to encourage workers to maintain a clean break room environment, wipe down appliances between each use.
* **Develop a plan in case of a resurgence.**
	+ In the likely event of another spike, what is the employer’s plan?
	+ In the event of a worker testing positive, what are the protocols?
	+ If a worker was in contact with a presumed positive case, what are the protocols?
	+ IT Infrastructure, security, employee equipment/laptops
* **Develop protocols for field workers.**
	+ What is the employer’s plan for cleaning of shared vehicles?
	+ Vehicles should contain a kit of masks/gloves/hand sanitizer/wipes that gets restocked regularly
	+ Restroom availability for field workers
	+ What is the employer’s plan for contact tracing for field workers?
* **Develop pandemic-related policies.**
	+ Sick time should not be docked for workers with COVID-19.
	+ Bereavement time should be granted to all workers.
	+ Workers at higher risk of severe disease
	+ Updated Indoor Air Quality Communication Plan w/ COVID-19 (at least annually by law)
* **Review and update the building emergency action plan.**
	+ Floor plan for hazard mapping to be provided to the Union
* **Post signage in the building.**
	+ Updated H&S signage in high traffic areas. Ex. facemask/coverings, handwashing, COVID19 symptoms, etc.
	+ Elevator capacity limits
	+ Room capacity limits (Including but not limited to rest rooms, break rooms, cafeterias and work areas)
	+ Social Distancing markers on the ground