

COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS REOPENING SAFETY GUIDELINES



Plan and prepare for building re-entry to help ensure the health and safety of employees, tenants, visitors/customers and others amid the coronavirus pandemic. Plans should be updated regularly as situations change and new information becomes available. Check the CDC and the EPA often for updates on COVID-19 and remain informed about any federal, state and city recommendations or orders that may impact your business.

General Information

- Put a team in place to develop, coordinate and implement safety guidelines.
- Communicate your re-entry plan with building personnel, tenants, vendors and contractors.
- Assess new risks as a result of re-entry; speak with your risk manager and insurance broker about potential liabilities.
- Review all new procedures and protocols, leases and contracts (along with any amendments), staffing and operational changes with an attorney to assess potential legal exposures. Be sure to understand guidance from Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and other employment-related laws.
- Provide building personnel with equipment and training necessary to perform their jobs safely. Conduct employee awareness training to help mitigate initial or further exposure to the coronavirus. Be sure training includes how to interact with tenants and visitors in the new post-COVID-19 environment.
- Follow CDC guidelines if a staff member is infected with the virus.



Building Health & Safety

- Display signage about social distancing, handwashing, etc. in parking facilities, entrances, exits, lobbies, common areas, elevators, and outside tenant and occupant spaces with the new rules and procedures.
- Follow CDC guidelines on social distancing and federal and state mandates on wearing face masks.
- Require building personnel, vendors and contractors to wear face masks provided by their employers.
- Advise tenants to follow state and local social-distancing guidelines and face mask recommendations. Ask tenants to share their re-entry plans.
- Have all employees maintain proper hygiene with frequent handwashing. Make hand sanitizers available in public spaces and common areas, including elevator lobbies, mailrooms, parking facilities, near restrooms, etc.
- Recommend tenants limit the number of visitors/guests to the building. Create visitor areas at the lobby desk with separate entrance and exit paths. Implement social-distancing protocols at security and lobby desks to protect personnel. Use a visitor management system with pre-registration to minimize interaction with the building's security or reception team.
- Coordinate with tenants to stagger work hours and/or workdays, provide flexible shifts and flextime to limit building occupancy during the initial re-entry phase.
- Follow state and local guidelines on limiting meetings and gatherings. Consider continuing virtual meetings. Conduct virtual tours of the premises for interested parties.
- Limit the number of elevator riders at a time when establishing social-distancing guidelines.
- Place queuing marks in elevator lobbies or wherever people typically line up to reinforce social distancing.
- Plan for more stairwell traffic and disinfect accordingly.
- Increase the space between the furniture in the lobby to support social distancing.
- Consider keeping building amenities, such as fitness areas, conference rooms, etc., closed for a period of time while initial re-entry takes place.
- If the building has a fitness center, before reopening increase space or restrict use of some equipment to maintain distance between guests.
- Consult with the janitorial contractor on new cleaning procedures and the supplies to be used. Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfection in high-density, high-touch areas such as building and elevator lobbies, bathroom doors and sinks, etc.
- For retail space, limit customer occupancy to 50% of store capacity; require customers to wear face coverings inside stores; consider shopping hours for the elderly, medically vulnerable, and health care workers; establish one-way aisles and traffic patterns for social distancing; increase curbside, pickup, and delivery service options; prompt customers regarding the importance of social distancing. All employees should wear face coverings.



Shared Equipment, Supplies & Space

- Per CDC guidance, employees should not share office equipment such as phones and computers. Provide cleaning and disinfection between uses on shared equipment (copiers, for example), and advise staff on the use of masks, gloves and other necessary protection.
- Partition workstations if possible, and rearrange office space to allow for social distancing.
- Provide or phase-in touch-free technology wherever possible. Restrooms ideally should be equipped with touch-free toilets, sinks, fixtures and dispensers.

Vendors & Contractors

- Request vendors and contractors share their health and safety plans and new protocols.
- Do not allow vendors or contractors to send staff that show symptoms of the virus or have been in contact with someone infected with COVID-19.
- Have a back-up supply of vendors in the event of supply-chain disruptions.

Property owners/managers should also have an emergency preparedness plan in place in the event there is a resurgence of the virus in the fall, as medical experts anticipate the coronavirus situation to continue throughout the year. The emergency plan should incorporate the appropriate pandemic response.

Sources: BOMA International, CDC, FEMA, OSHA, EEOC

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