



## COVID-19 Essential Office Guidance

UPDATED ON DECEMBER 16, 2020

**Note:** On Friday, August 28, 2020, the State announced a shift from its Monitoring List to a color-coded four-tier Blueprint for a Safe Reopening. In doing so, the State altered the reopening plans for some businesses and activities, opening some that had been prohibited and imposing new standards on others. The State also reiterated that local Health Officers have the power to impose greater restrictions than the State.

Indoor essential office facilities are strongly encouraged to continue allowing employees to work remotely as much as possible.

### PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document provides guidance for indoor essential office facilities. This guidance is intended to support a safe, clean working environment for personnel and visitors.

If you have any questions or require technical assistance email us at [COVIDRecovery@acgov.org](mailto:COVIDRecovery@acgov.org)

For business resources please visit Alameda County's Reopening and Recover page [here](#).

NOTE: The [Alameda County Reopening Plan](#) is in alignment with the [State's Blueprint for Safer Economy](#), but there will be areas where Alameda County is more restrictive than the State. The more restrictive guidance predominates.

### BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS

1. Prepare and implement a [COVID-19 Site-Specific Protection Plan](#) based on local and State industry guidance, specifically the California COVID-19 Industry Guidance for Office Workspaces which can be viewed [here](#) and the guidance in this document. Site-Specific Protection Plan Guidance and a Template for Developing Your Own Plan can be viewed [here](#).
2. Train employees on COVID-19 prevention, symptom screening, face coverings, and the importance of physical distancing and frequent handwashing.
3. Implement symptom screening for all employees and **do not** allow employees who exhibit symptoms to come to work. Screening tools can be viewed [here](#), under Tools and Resources for Businesses.
4. Develop and implement cleaning and disinfecting protocols in your Site-Specific Protection Plan.
5. Establish physical distancing guidelines and record them in your Site-Specific Protection Plan.
6. Ensure compliance with the Alameda County Face Covering Order by all persons in your place of business (patrons, employees, suppliers, etc.). Alameda County's Face Covering Order can be

viewed [here](#). Both personnel and patrons will be required to wear a face covering—including during exercise—unless they are specifically exempted from the face covering requirements in Health Officer Order No. 20-13, updated on June 5, 2020 or comply with specific requirements set forth below.

7. Comply with guidance issued by the California Blueprint for Safer Economy, and all Local Health Officer Orders, and applicable federal, state, and local provisions for paid sick leave for individuals who cannot safely work for reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The California Blueprint for Safer Economy can be viewed [here](#) and all Local Health Orders [here](#).

## HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

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In addition to fulfilling the Business Requirements, each owner, operator, manager, or supervisor of a an indoor essential office facility must address the items below in their [COVID-19 Site-Specific Protection Plan](#).

### 1. *Section 1 – Additional Requirements for All Indoor Essential Office Facilities:*

- 1.1. Wearing face coverings are always mandatory for employees and other persons in the indoor office facility.
  - 1.1.1. This includes while working alone at a cubicle or any space that is not completely enclosed, such as an office with a door.
  - 1.1.2. Face coverings must be worn in completely enclosed spaces if more than one employee works in the space, whether at the same time or on an alternating schedule.
  - 1.1.3. A face covering must be put on before anyone else enters the private enclosed space.
  - 1.1.4. Employers must provide face coverings or reimburse employees for their cost.
  - 1.1.5. An office employee is not required to wear a face covering if a medical professional has provided a written exemption to the face covering requirement, based on a medical condition, other health concern or disability.
    - 1.1.5.1. Employees who have been instructed by their medical provider that they should not wear a face covering should wear a non-restrictive alternative, such as a face shield with a drape attached to the bottom edge, in order to be in compliance with State directives as long as their condition permits it.
  - 1.1.6. Masks with one-way valves must **not** be used.
  - 1.1.7. Employers and managers should familiarize themselves fully with the [Alameda County Face Covering Order](#) and the Face Covering [FAQ](#) for information regarding face coverings in the workplace.
- 1.2. Employees must maintain 6 feet of physical distance to the greatest extent possible.
  - 1.2.1. Employers should continue to encourage working remotely as much as possible and should make reasonable accommodations to facilitate working remotely.
  - 1.2.2. All workstations should be 6 feet apart. Seating charts and workstations may need to be reconfigured to accomplish this.
  - 1.2.3. Employees should be separated by impermeable physical barriers at least 6 feet in height wherever possible and when physical distancing of 6 feet cannot be maintained.
  - 1.2.4. The workspaces of receptionists and other personnel who routinely interact with members of the public or other employees should be behind a Plexiglass barrier.

- 1.2.5. Elevator capacity should be limited to the number of people that can be accommodated while maintaining a 6 feet physical distance:
  - 1.2.5.1. During peak building entry and exit times, this number can be adjusted to 4 individuals or fewer at a time, for any elevator that does not allow for 6 feet of physical distance between riders.
  - 1.2.5.2. All elevator riders are required to wear cloth face coverings.
  - 1.2.5.3. To ease elevator traffic, stairwells should be opened for “up” or “down” traffic with increased cleaning of stairwells
- 1.2.6. Common areas should be configured with impermeable barriers, restricted access, and increased physical distance between tables and chairs to comply with health and safety requirements.
- 1.2.7. Employees are discouraged from congregating in any area, but especially common areas or high traffic areas such as bathrooms, hallways and stairwells.
- 1.2.8. In-person meetings are strongly discouraged in favor of virtual meetings. If in-person meetings are essential, they are limited to 10 or fewer participants and all participants must wear cloth face coverings and meetings must be held in rooms large enough to maintain physical distancing.
- 1.3. Nonessential travel should be discontinued. For safe practices during essential travel view guidance from the CDC [here](#).
- 1.4. If employers provide or allow food to be consumed in the office facility, then the Department of Environmental Health (DEH) Restaurant Operating Procedures should be followed. The DEH Restaurant Operating Procedures can be viewed [here](#).
  - 1.4.1. Potluck or buffet style meals are prohibited.
  - 1.4.2. Food servings should be individually wrapped.
  - 1.4.3. Parties/celebrations are prohibited.
  - 1.4.4. Cafeterias are subject to the [DEH Restaurant Operating Procedures](#).