



COVID-19 Office Workspace Guidance

UPDATED ON April 7, 2021

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document serves as supplemental guidance to the [California State COVID-19 Industry Guidance for Office Workspaces](#)—with the aim to support a safe, modified environment for personnel, patrons, vendors, and visitors. For the purposes of this document, “office workspaces” include but are not limited to traditional offices, cubicle settings, private offices, co-working spaces, creative spaces, residential and commercial workstations, pods, and all other indoor work environments used to conduct commercial or professional tasks. For the purposes of this document, office workspaces **do not** include personal home offices.

Note: Additional workplace guidance and resources can be found online via [Alameda County Reopening and Recovery](#) and [Cal/OSHA](#). For questions and/or technical assistance, email us at COVIDRecovery@acgov.org.

General Overview

Alameda County is fully aligned with the [California State Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#) reopening plan.

- Indoor office settings are permitted to reopen, with modifications as indicated in the [California State COVID-19 Industry Guidance for Office Workspaces](#).
- Continue to allow employees to work remotely, as much as possible.
- Employees should be [screened for COVID-19 symptoms upon arrival at the office](#), daily.
- All employers must prepare and implement a [COVID-19 Worksite-Specific Protection Plan](#) upon reopening.

BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS

- Prepare and implement a COVID-19 Worksite-Specific Protection Plan (template available in [English](#), [Chinese](#), and [Spanish](#)) based on [California State COVID-19 Industry Guidance for Office Workspaces](#).
- Develop and include [cleaning and disinfecting](#) protocols in your Worksite-Specific Protection Plan.
- Establish and include physical distancing guidelines in your Worksite-Specific Protection Plan.
- Implement [Self-Assessment Symptom Screenings](#) for all personnel (e.g., employees, contractors, volunteers, etc.) prior to the start of each shift. Do not allow personnel who exhibit symptoms to enter the workplace. For more information, see [COVID-19 Screening Guidance for Businesses and Organizations](#).
- Train employees on COVID-19 prevention, symptom screening, face coverings, as well as the importance of physical distancing and frequent hand-washing.

- Ensure compliance with the [California State Face Covering Order](#) by requiring everyone (e.g., personnel, patrons, vendors, visitors, etc.) to wear a mask or face covering during their time at the office facility. Be prepared to 1) provide a mask to anyone who does not have one, and 2) turn away anyone who refuses to wear a mask or face covering in the office workspace. For a list of exemptions, see [California State Mask Wearing Exceptions](#).
- Comply with [California State Industry Guidance to Reduce Risk](#), [Cal/OSHA emergency temporary standards on COVID-19 infection prevention](#), [Alameda County Health Officer Orders](#), and applicable federal, state, and local [provisions for paid sick leave](#) to accommodate individuals who cannot safely work for reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to fulfilling the business requirements listed above, each owner, operator, manager, or supervisor of an indoor office facility must address the following items in the [COVID-19 Worksite-Specific Protection Plan](#):

A. Measures to Comply with Face Covering Order

- A.1** Everyone (e.g., employees, patrons, vendors, visitors, etc.) must wear a mask or face covering during their time in the office facility. For more information, see [California State Masks and Face Coverings](#).
 - A.1.1** This includes while working alone at a cubicle or any other space that is not a completely enclosed, private (single occupancy) office.
 - A.1.2** This includes while working in a completely enclosed space if more than one unvaccinated person works in that space, whether at the same time or on an alternating schedule.
 - A.1.3** Persons working in a completely enclosed, private (single occupancy) office may remove their face covering but must immediately put it back on before anyone else enters the space.
 - A.1.4** Exceptions apply for persons with a written exemption from a medical professional.
 - A.1.4.1** Persons exempted from wearing a face covering due to a medical condition who are employed in a job involving regular contact with others must wear a non-restrictive alternative, such as a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, as permissible by their condition.
 - A.1.5** Employers must be prepared to [provide face coverings or reimburse employees](#) for their cost.
 - A.1.6** Masks with one-way valves are not permitted for use.

B. Measures to Ensure Physical Distancing

- B.1** Everyone (e.g., personnel, patrons, vendors, visitors, etc.) must maintain 6 feet of physical distance from others in the office, as often as possible. Employees may momentarily reduce that distance when necessary to accept payment, deliver goods or services, or as otherwise necessary.
 - B.1.1** Employers should continue to encourage teleworking, as much as possible.
 - B.1.1.1** Employers should make reasonable accommodations to facilitate remote work.
 - B.1.2** All workstations should be positioned 6 feet apart.

B1.2.1 Seating charts and workstations may need to be reconfigured to allow distancing.

B.1.3 Employees should be separated by impermeable physical barriers, at least 6 feet in height, wherever possible—especially when physical distancing of 6 feet cannot be maintained.

B.1.3.1 Workspaces for receptionists and other personnel who routinely interact with other workers and/or members of the public should be positioned behind a Plexiglass barrier.

B.2 Special considerations should be made for elevators to support physical distancing.

B.2.1 Elevator capacity should be limited to the number of people that can be accommodated at one time *while* maintaining 6 feet of physical distance from others in the elevator car.

B.2.1.1 During peak building entry and exit times, the number of people can be adjusted to *up to 4 persons at a time* for any elevator that does not allow for 6 feet of physical distance between riders.

B.2.2 To ease elevator traffic, stairwells should be opened for one-way directional traffic (i.e., either “up” or “down” access only).

B.2.2.1 A stairwell cleaning and disinfecting schedule should be developed and implemented in accordance with the office’s COVID-19 Worksite-Specific Protection Plan.

B.2.3 All elevator riders are required to wear a mask or face covering while in the elevator car.

B.3 Common areas including but not limited to pantries, breakrooms, meeting spaces, mail rooms, printer areas, lounges, game rooms, and lobbies should be configured with impermeable barriers and increased physical distance between tables and chairs to comply with all health and safety guidance.

B.3.1. Employees should be discouraged from congregating in any area, but especially within common or high traffic areas such as bathrooms, hallways, and stairwells.

C. Measures for Cleaning & Disinfecting and Ventilation

C.1 Frequently clean and disinfect high traffic areas and commonly used surfaces.

C.1.1 Clean touchable surfaces between shifts and between users, whichever occurs more frequently.

C.1.1.1 Limit the sharing of objects, such as tools, laptops, notebooks, telephones, touchscreens, and writing utensils.

C.1.1.2 Display cleaning supplies in a general vicinity to allow personnel (e.g., employees, contractors, volunteers, etc.) to clean and disinfect on their own.

C.1.2 Equip shared spaces with proper sanitation products, including hand sanitizer and sanitizing products; monitor inventory to ensure sanitation product availability.

C.1.3 Provide and maintain hand hygiene stations in office facility, including warm running water, soap, and disposable paper towels, as well as alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60% or more alcohol for areas where handwashing is not feasible.

C.1.4 Ensure that sanitary facilities remain stocked and operational.

C.1.5 Use products that are on the [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) Approved List](#) for cleaning and disinfecting against COVID-19.

C.1.6 Train all personnel on chemical hazards, product instructions, ventilation requirements, and [Cal/OSHA requirements](#). Follow California State’s [Asthma-Safer Cleaning Methods](#).

- C.2** Follow [California State Interim Guidance for Ventilation, Filtration, and Air Quality](#) to reduce possible airborne exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19 in rooms and buildings.
 - C.2.1** Consider upgrades to improve air filtration and ventilation.
 - C.2.2** Consider installing portable high-efficiency air cleaners.
 - C.2.3** Maximize the natural ventilation rate by opening windows and doors and directing indoor air flow away from occupants to the greatest extent possible.

D. Measures for Food Safety and Gatherings

- D.1** If the office facility provides food or allows food to be consumed, [Department of Environmental Health \(DEH\) Restaurant Operating Procedures](#) should be followed.
 - D.1.1** Cafeterias are subject to [DEH Restaurant Operating Procedures](#).
 - D.1.2** Food servings should be individually wrapped, if possible.
- D.2** Beginning April 15, 2021, private events and meetings (e.g., office parties) will be allowed in all tiers with modifications that include capacity limits and testing/proof of vaccination requirements. Detailed guidance is forthcoming and will be located on [California State's Industry Guidance to Reduce Risk](#) webpage.