

**Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19):
Best Practices for Businesses, Community Establishments
and Public Events**

This guidance describes best practices that businesses, community establishments, and event organizers are recommended to follow to help reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission among workers, patrons¹ and the community. This guidance is **NOT** intended for use in healthcare settings, correctional facilities, or homeless shelters. For guidance **and resource links** specific to these settings, visit coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.

Definitions:

Exposure to COVID-19: Determining whether a person was exposed to COVID-19 should take into account factors including time, distance, mask use, ventilation, activities, and severity of symptoms. More information on exposure risk can be found at cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/risks-exposure.html.

COVID-19 Hospital Admission level- a tool created by the CDC to help communities and individuals decide what prevention steps to take based on the COVID-19 level in their area. There are 3 levels: **LOW, MEDIUM, and HIGH**. When COVID-19 Hospital Admission levels are **LOW**, the risk of catching and spreading COVID-19 is lower for everyone. To look up current COVID-19 Hospital Admission levels for DC and other areas of the U.S., see cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html

Infectious period: The time-period during which someone is infectious, or able to spread their infection to others. The infectious period for COVID-19 typically starts two days before symptom onset and ends 10 days after symptom onset (or test date for people who do not have symptoms).

Core elements of COVID-19 prevention:

Vaccination:

- Encourage and consider providing incentives to employees to stay **up to date** on their COVID-19 vaccine. This can help minimize the impact of COVID-19 in the workplace.
 - **A person is considered up to date if they have had all recommended doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, including booster doses.**²
 - People who are up to date on their COVID-19 vaccine have lower risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19 compared to people who are unvaccinated or who have only received the primary series.
- Support staff by providing leave options for them to get the COVID-19 vaccine and for if they experience vaccine side effects.
- DC Health and the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) have a Vaccine Exchange Program that connects District organizations with vaccine providers that can assist with setting up COVID-19 vaccination clinics for employees in the workplace or at other designated sites..
 - Business and community organizations are eligible to participate in the Vaccine Exchange Program. Organizations interested in setting up a vaccine clinic should submit a request at request coronavirus.dc.gov/vaccineexchange.

¹ The generic term “patron” is used throughout this guidance for simplicity. Please substitute whatever term is appropriate for the people served by your establishment (e.g., customer, client, visitor, attendee, guest, congregant).

² For detailed information about staying up to date on your COVID-19 vaccine, see cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html.

- **Any DC business or community establishment may choose to require their staff to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and may require proof of vaccination from patrons to enter the facility.**

Actively encourage staff to stay home if they are sick.

- Staff with symptoms of COVID-19 should be strongly encouraged to get tested and to consult with their healthcare provider as needed.
 - For information on where to get a COVID-19 test in DC, see testinglocator.cdc.gov/.
- If a worker or patron develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at the facility or event, businesses, community establishments, and event organizers should have a plan in place for that individual to immediately isolate, notify their supervisor (if the individual is an employee), and leave the premises.
- Leave policies should be flexible and non-punitive, and should account for the following:
 - Employees who report COVID-19 symptoms
 - Employees who are isolating due to testing positive for COVID-19
 - Employees who have been tested for COVID-19 (for reasons including symptoms, travel, or exposure) and are awaiting test results
 - Employees who need to stay home with their children if there are school or childcare closures, or to care for sick family members.
 - Employees who need to get a COVID-19 vaccine or those who are experiencing vaccine side effects.

Masks & respirators

- Masks continue to be an important tool to prevent symptomatic and asymptomatic spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses.
- Please review *Mask and Respirator Guidance* at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.
 - **NOTE:** Business, community, and event organizers may choose to have stricter indoor masking policies for patrons and employees than is stated in our guidance.
 - **NOTE: Employees and patrons should be encouraged to respect the choice of others who wish to wear a mask or respirator even when not required.**

Ventilation

- Keep indoor spaces well ventilated. Bring in fresh air by opening windows or doors as much as possible.
- For more information about building ventilation, see *Ventilation in Buildings* at cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/ventilation.html.

Physical distancing

- Employees and patrons can decrease the risk of being exposed to COVID-19 by maintaining a distance of 6 feet from other people when indoors.
- Businesses, community establishments, and event organizers can help keep employees and patrons safe by encouraging physical distancing, especially when COVID-19 Hospital Admission Levels are **HIGH**.

Cleaning and disinfection

- For comprehensive guidance on cleaning and disinfection, including procedures to follow if someone with COVID-19 was at the establishment, see cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html.

Responding to COVID-19 in the workplace

- Have a plan in place for what to do if a worker or patron is diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Encourage workers to report a diagnosis of COVID-19 to the establishment as soon as possible.
- Identify a point of contact at the establishment that a worker (or patron) can notify if they test positive for COVID-19 and choose to disclose this information.
- If a worker or patron chooses to report to the business, community establishment, or event organizer that they are positive for COVID-19, the establishment or designated point of contact should:
 - Refer the COVID-19 positive person to *Guidance for Isolation: People Who Test Positive for COVID-19* at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.
 - If possible, notify individuals who may have been exposed so they can get tested and take appropriate precautions if they choose. **The notification must not identify the COVID-19 positive individual.** If the COVID-19 positive person was not at the facility during their infectious period (see *page 1*), the risk of exposure is minimal, and no further steps are necessary other than continuing routine precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Return to work: For information about what to do after exposure or **duration** of isolation, please see *Guidance for Close Contacts of a Person Confirmed to have COVID-19: Precautions, Quarantine and Testing* and *Guidance for Isolation: People Who Test Positive for COVID-19* at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.

The guidelines above will continue to be updated as necessary. Please visit coronavirus.dc.gov for the most updated information.