

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

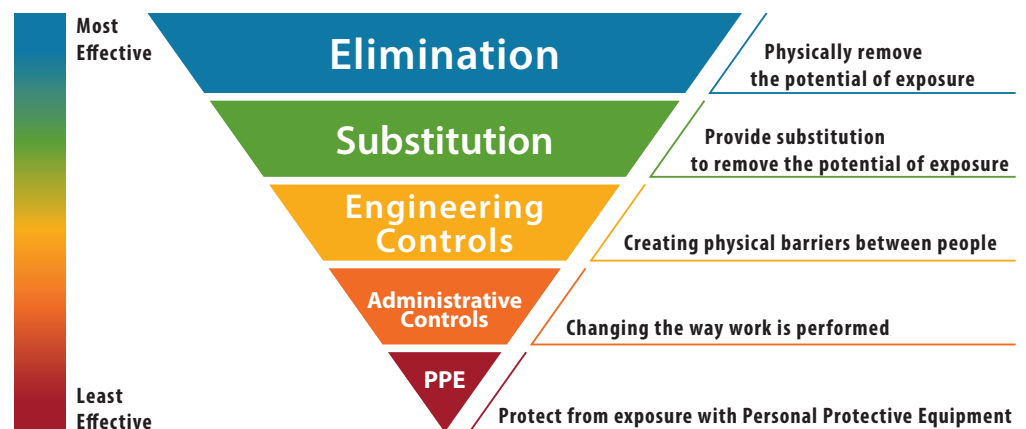
GUIDANCE FOR BUSINESS REOPENING

Businesses play an important role in limiting the spread of COVID-19 by mitigating the risks that the coronavirus will be transmitted to employees and customers. The business community's success in implementing mitigation strategies will, in large part, determine how much the virus spreads through the community and whether more public health orders are required to stop the spread.

All businesses should understand that communication is critical. This includes communicating with employees, customers, and the public so that everyone who interacts with the business understands the mitigation measures that have been taken and what each person can do to protect everyone's health.

Businesses should continuously revise, iterate, and implement the latest prevention strategies. Importantly, prevention strategies vary in effectiveness from using personal protective equipment to physically removing the potential of exposure. Accordingly, St. Louis County strongly recommends that businesses implement strategies in order of priority, with the most effective prevention approaches being treated as more urgent.

PREVENTION APPROACHES TO ILLNESS AND INFECTION



Elimination Strategies

The most important set of strategies involve physically removing the potential of exposure. These elimination strategies include ensuring that employees quarantine or isolate if they have or are believed to have COVID-19 or have come into contact with individuals who have COVID-19. To do so, businesses should educate their employees about disinfection processes and social distancing practices, quarantine and isolation, regularly screen employees to see if they have come into contact with a COVID-19 positive person, and insist that quarantine and isolation policies are strictly followed.

Substitution Strategies

Whenever possible, have people work or access the business from home; this should include restructuring responsibilities to minimize the numbers of employees that need to be physically present. Consider redistributing responsibilities to reduce contact between individuals, and using technology to facilitate communication. For workplaces this can mean instituting work from home policies for all non-essential personnel. For essential personnel and workplaces, it can mean reducing the number of employees on a shift and keeping employees further apart.

For general questions or concerns call **877-435-8411**. Get text message alerts by texting **STLOUISCOALERT** to **67283**. To keep up with the local response and testing sites visit **stlcorona.com** or call **314-615-2660**.

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Engineering Controls

Businesses should also implement engineering controls by creating physical barriers between people to reduce transmission. Businesses whose employees interact with the public should install physical barriers between customers and employees or otherwise use design elements to ensure six feet of distance between customers and employees, particularly in check-out lines or return-lines or any other place where there is continued contact between the customer and employee. In all areas which are prone to lines or congregation, install clear markings with signage, tape, or other means that show six (6) feet of distance as the appropriate spacing between customers. Provide signage inside and outside the facility outlining Social Distancing Requirements, limitations on crowd size, and procedures to limit crowd size.

Administrative Controls

Administrative controls change the way employees perform their work. Businesses should implement the following administrative controls:

Reduce Face-to-Face Contact

- whenever possible, have employees work from home;
- restructure employee responsibilities to minimize the numbers of employees that need to be physically present at any one time;
- stagger work schedules to reduce the number of people on the premises at any one time;
- arrange for contactless payment, pick-up, and delivery options whenever feasible and provide postings as to the availability of such services;

Frequent Sanitation

- require frequent sanitation of all high touch surfaces, such as restrooms, shared computers, check-out areas, carts, baskets, and any other areas that may be frequently touched by customers, employees, or any other individuals;
- provide breaks for employees for hand washing or sanitizing opportunities throughout the day;
- prohibit customers from bringing outside containers, including reusable bags or boxes, into the facility;

Require Face Coverings

- provide face masks or supplies to make face masks to all employees or volunteers working in their facilities;
- require employees or volunteers to wear face masks at work, unless the employee or volunteer is working alone in an enclosed area;

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Regular Screening

- identify employees and volunteers who are potentially ill with COVID-19 through daily screening for symptoms;

Manage Crowds

- limit the number of employees, customers, and other people who are permitted to be in the facility at any one time so that each of them can follow social distancing practices;
- in all areas which are prone to lines or congregation, install clear markings with signage, tape, or other means that show six feet of distance as the appropriate spacing between customers;

Protect the Vulnerable

- establish hours of operation, wherever possible, for individuals at high-risk of experiencing adverse outcomes from COVID-19;

Personal Protective Equipment

Use of personal protective equipment ("PPE") is the least effective risk mitigation strategy. Distribution of PPE means that workers use face masks, and, in some situations, gloves.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Whenever possible, have people work or access the business from home; this should include restructuring responsibilities to minimize the numbers of employees that need to be physically present. Consider the questions below:

- Are you able to reduce the number of employees who are public-facing?
- Are you able to have the same consistent employee(s) be public-facing?
- Are you able to conduct your business with a reduced number of people on site?
- Do you have an adequate supply of and capacity to provide hand sanitizing stations, soap, and paper towels for employees and consumers?
- How will you implement sanitizing and disinfection of work spaces?
- Which staff member will be responsible for monitoring this?
- Are there restricted points of entrance and exit that force people to be in close proximity and/or pass through high-touch areas (e.g. turnstiles, fingerprint entry, doors and elevators)?

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RESPONDING TO CHANGES IN COVID-19 TRENDS

Addressing Uncontrolled Increases in COVID-19 Transmission

The progression of COVID-19 will be continuously monitored by public health officials and community leaders. It is likely that restrictions will need to be reinstituted to mitigate disease spread and ensure the safety of the community if a substantial number of cases cannot be traced back to known cases; there is a sustained rise in new cases; or hospitals are no longer able to safely treat all patients requiring hospitalization.

The Department of Public Health will focus on addressing transmission increases with the most precise and lowest levels of closures and quarantines that are possible to reduce spread and will escalate in the following order:

1. Individuals and their immediate close contacts will be quarantined;
2. If a single business entity is identifiable as a source of transmission, the department may recommend closure for additional social distancing requirements to improve adherence;
3. If it becomes clear that a significant portion of cases are being linked to a specific industry, the department may issue stronger recommendations or closure recommendations by industry;
4. If transmission and spread becomes uncontrolled across the County, the department may require additional community closures.

By following public health guidelines and recommendations throughout the period of reopening and recovery, we can all help prevent the need for such measures in the future. All of the actions and behaviors of residents can help us function safely.

Further Easing Restrictions as Transmission is Controlled

The Department will continue to consider all available indicators for further easing and advise businesses and the public accordingly.

Resources

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

Occupational Safety and Health Administration: Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19.

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

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