Interim Guidance for Salons, Massage and Personal Care Business Settings
(November 23, 2020)

Governor Cooper has implemented a phased approach to slowly lift restrictions while combatting COVID-19, protecting North Carolinians and working together to recover the economy.

Businesses and organizations should follow the guidelines below to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

**Guidelines for Conducting Business:** Any scenario in which many people gather together poses a risk for COVID-19 transmission. All businesses and agencies where groups of people gather in an enclosed space should create and implement a plan to minimize the opportunity for COVID-19 transmission at their facility. The guidance below will help public-facing businesses and agencies reduce the spread of COVID-19 in their communities.

This guidance covers the following topics:
- Social Distancing and Minimizing Exposure
- Cloth Face Coverings
- Cleaning and Hygiene
- Monitoring for Symptoms
- Protecting Vulnerable Populations
- Combatting Misinformation
- Water and Ventilation Systems
- Additional Resources

**Social Distancing and Minimizing Exposure**

Social distancing is a key tool we currently have to decrease the spread of COVID-19. Social distancing ("physical distancing") means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home. Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms’ length) from other people; do not gather in groups; stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings. Phase 2 includes several requirements and recommendations to support social distancing in spaces where the public may gather.

Personal care businesses are **required** to:
- Limit occupancy to no more than 50 percent of the stated fire capacity or 12 per 1,000 square feet if there is not a fire code number readily available AND ensure sufficient social distancing with at least 6-foot separation between patrons
- Post the reduced “Emergency Maximum Capacity” in a noticeable place. [Sign templates](https://example.com) are available in English and Spanish on the NC DHHS COVID-19 response site.
- Arrange or use seating so that customers are separated from one another by six (6) feet.
Mark six (6) feet of spacing in lines at point of sale and in other high-traffic areas for customers, such as at cash registers.

It is recommended that personal care businesses:

- Post signage at the main entrance that reminds people to use face coverings and wash hands. Know Your Ws sign templates are available in English and Spanish on the NC DHHS COVID-19 response site.
- Direct customers to stay at least six (6) feet apart from one another.
- Provide marks on the floors of restrooms and locker rooms to indicate proper social distancing. When sinks are not 6 feet apart, consider limiting use to every other sink. If possible, designate entrance and exit doors for restrooms and locker rooms so occupants do not come face to face.
- Provide social distancing floor markings for customers in check-out area.
- Space areas where services will be provided such as salon chairs at least 6 feet apart. Designate which chairs are to be used, and which may not be used, if chairs are less than 6 feet apart.
- Close your waiting room, all common seating areas, and lounge areas.
  - Consider requiring appointment for customers.
  - Provide alternate notification procedures for customers where they can wait in the car or outside until their appointment.
- Encourage the use of plexi-glass or a similar barrier between customer and employee during face-to-face services that cannot be completed without close contact, such as a manicure.
- Keep closed all areas where social distancing cannot be maintained, such as saunas, steam rooms, and whirlpools.
- Limit use of shared areas such as shampooing areas or other common areas so that social distancing can be maintained.
- Consider staggering appointment times so that social distancing is achievable, especially if limited resources are available.
- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possibly by opening windows and doors, using fans, or other methods. Do not open windows and doors if they pose a safety or health risk to people using the facility.

Cloth Face Coverings

There is growing evidence that wearing a face covering can help reduce the spread of COVID-19, especially because people may be infected with the virus and not know it.

Personal care businesses are required to:

- Have all workers wear a face covering unless the worker states that an exception applies.
- Have all customers wear a face covering when they are inside the establishment, unless the customer states that an exception applies.
  - Customers may take off their Face Coverings if they are receiving a facial treatment, shave, or other services on a part of the head which the Face Covering covers or by which the Face Covering is secured.
- Visit NC DHHS COVID-19 response site for more information about the face covering guidance and access sign templates that are available in English and Spanish.

It is recommended that personal care businesses:
FAQs

What is an Interim Guidance?

Interim Guidance is guidance provided by public health authorities to inform and guide people on how to respond to emerging public health threats. It is not a formal document with the power of law but provides information and recommendations to help prevent the spread of disease. The guidance is updated regularly as new information becomes available.

Interim Guidance is not a substitute for legal requirements. Non-compliance with legal requirements can lead to enforcement actions. It is important to follow all legal requirements related to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as any other public health measures that may be in place.

Who can use Interim Guidance?

Interim Guidance is intended for use by businesses, organizations, and individuals to help them stay informed about the latest recommendations for managing the COVID-19 pandemic. It is not intended for use by regulatory agencies or enforcement officials.

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Who is responsible for following Interim Guidance?

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NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- Enforcing employees staying home if sick.
- Encouraging liberal use of sick leave policy.
- Expanding paid leave policies to allow employees to stay home when sick.

(/[per CDC guidelines](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/worksafety/workplace-preparedness.html), if an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is presumed positive by a medical professional due to symptoms, the employee should be excluded from work until:
  - No fever for at least 24 hours since recovery (without the use of fever-reducing medicine) AND
  - Other symptoms have improved (e.g., coughing, shortness of breath) AND
  - At least 10 days have passed since first symptoms

*A test-based strategy is no longer recommended to discontinue isolation or precautions and employers should not require documentation of a negative test before allowing a worker to return.*

/[per CDC guidelines](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/worksafety/workplace-preparedness.html), if an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 but does not have symptoms, they should remain out of work until 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test.

- Require symptomatic employees to wear masks until leaving the facility. Cleaning and disinfecting procedures should be implemented by designated personnel following [CDC guidelines](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/worksafety/workplace-preparedness.html) once sick employee leaves.

- Provide employees with information on help lines to access information or other support in reference to COVID-19, e.g. 211 and Hope4NC Helpline (1-855-587-3463).

Protecting Vulnerable Populations

Information on who is at higher risk for severe disease is available from the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov) and [NC DHHS](https://www.ncdhhs.gov).

**It is recommended that personal care businesses:**

- Designate a specific time for persons at higher risk to access the venue without the general population (such as early morning, or late afternoon).
- Enable employees to self-identify as high risk for severe disease and reassign work to minimize face-to-face contact and to allow them to maintain a distance of six feet from others, or to telework if possible.

Combatting Misinformation

Help ensure that the information your employees is getting is coming directly from reliable resources. Use resources from a trusted source like the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov) or [NCDHHS](https://www.ncdhhs.gov) to promote behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19.

**It is recommended that personal care businesses:**

- Put up signs and posters, such as those found [Know Your Ws: Wear, Wait, Wash](https://www.ncdhhs.gov) and those found [Social Media Toolkit for COVID-19](https://www.ncdhhs.gov).

Water and Ventilation Systems
Reduced use of water and ventilation systems can pose their own health hazards. There is increased risk for Legionella and other waterborne pathogens from stagnant or standing water.

**Before reopening, it is recommended that personal care businesses:**

- Follow the CDC’s [Guidance](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopening-guidance.html) for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation to minimize the risk of diseases associated with water.
- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, or other methods. Do not open windows and doors if they pose a safety or health risk to people using the facility.

**Additional Resources**

- NC DHHS: [North Carolina COVID-19](https://www.nc.gov/covid19)
- CDC: [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/industry/cleaning-disinfecting.html)
- EPA: [Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2](https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2)

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Staying apart brings us together.
Protect your family and neighbors.

#StayStrongNC

Learn more at nc.gov/covid19.