



## NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

### Interim Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Guidance for Public-Facing Businesses and Agencies

March 14, 2020

Any scenario in which many people gather together poses a risk for COVID-19 transmission, including waiting rooms, lines, and any other time a large number of people are in the same space. All businesses and agencies that congregate people in an enclosed space, including but not limited to government agencies (e.g., DMV, courts), retail stores, healthcare facilities, and office buildings, should create a plan to minimize the opportunity for COVID-19 transmission at their facility.

This guidance will help public-facing businesses and agencies plan and prepare for COVID-19 in their communities.

#### Plan Ahead

- Review any emergency plans you already have and update them if necessary.
- Make a plan for what you will do if large numbers of employees are unable to attend work, which may occur if schools are closed or their family members are sick. Identify key positions and cross-train staff to ensure all essential functions will be covered.
- Consider alternative options to gathering large groups of people, such as having people wait in their cars and alerting them by phone when you are ready.
- [Stay informed](#) about COVID-19 in your community.

#### Communicate

- Instruct patrons to stay home if they are sick. If applicable, have a flexible cancellation/rescheduling policy so sick people and people taking care of COVID-19 patients are able to stay home.
- If you have employees who are at a higher risk for complications from COVID-19, including people over 65 and those with pre-existing medical conditions such as diabetes, chronic lung disease and chronic heart disease, or a compromised immune system (e.g., cancer, cancer treatment, or other immunosuppressant treatments), find positions that minimize contact with the public.
- Create flexible sick leave policies so employees stay home from work when they are sick.
- Post signs encouraging patrons to leave immediately if they begin to show symptoms of illness, COVID-19 or otherwise.

#### Keep Everyone Healthy

- Have respiratory hygiene supplies available for employees and patrons, including hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol, tissues, and lined trash cans.

- Promote behaviors that prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including COVID-19, among patrons and employees. Use resources from a trusted source like the [CDC](#) or [NC DHHS](#).
- Disinfect frequently-touched surfaces with a [cleaning agent that is effective against coronaviruses](#) throughout the day and at close of business.

### **Practice Social Distancing**

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention state people should practice social distancing by remaining six feet apart to minimize the risk of coronavirus infection. Recognizing that this may be challenging, below are examples of application.
- Place chairs six feet apart from each other.
- If you typically have people waiting in line, consider marking six-foot intervals on the floor for patrons to stand on.
- Only let as many people in as your facility can accommodate while everyone remains six feet apart. If people must wait to be let in, have them wait in their cars and contact them by phone when they can enter.
- Have employees remain six feet apart from patrons whenever possible. (CDC defines close contact as being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for 10 or more minutes.)

### **Cancelling or Postponing Events**

- [As directed by the Governor](#), all events greater than 100 people should be postponed or cancelled to prevent the transmission of COVID-19.
- If your business or agency hosts events that gather up to 100 people, please read the guidance about [managing events](#).

### **Patrons Later Diagnosed with COVID-19**

- If a patron is diagnosed with COVID-19 after visiting your facility, your local health department may ask you for contact information for anyone who may have had close contact with the patient.
  - If this occurs, attendees who had close contact with the COVID-19 patient will be asked to monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days.
- If you hear about a patron who was diagnosed with COVID-19 shortly after visiting your business, [contact your local health department](#).
- If an patron is later diagnosed with COVID-19, ensure that all areas of the facility they visited have been cleaned with an [agent that is active against coronaviruses](#). You do not need to close your business unless the local health department advises you to do so.

For more information about COVID-19 preparedness for businesses, please see the CDC's [Resources for Businesses and Employers](#).

For general information about COVID-19, refer to the [North Carolina COVID-19 website](#).