TEXAS Health and Human Services

Texas Department of State Health Services

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Commissioner

Employers may operate their offices with up to the greater of 10 individuals or 50% of the total office occupancy, provided the individuals maintain appropriate social distancing.

The following are the minimum recommended health protocols for all office work employers choosing to operate in Texas. Office work employers may adopt additional protocols consistent with their specific needs and circumstances to help protect the health and safety of all employees, contractors, and customers.

The virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread to others by infected persons who have few or no symptoms. Even if an infected person is only mildly ill, the people they spread it to may become seriously ill or even die, especially if that person is 65 or older with pre-existing health conditions that place them at higher risk. Because of the hidden nature of this threat, everyone should rigorously follow the practices specified in these protocols, all of which facilitate a safe and measured reopening of Texas. The virus that causes COVID-19 is still circulating in our communities. We should continue to observe practices that protect everyone, including those who are most vulnerable.

Please note, public health guidance cannot anticipate every unique situation. Office work employers should stay informed and take actions based on common sense and wise judgment that will protect health and support economic revitalization. Employers should also be mindful of federal and state employment and disability laws, workplace safety standards, and accessibility standards to address the needs of both workers and customers.

Health protocols for your employees and contractors:

☐ Train all employees and contractors on appropriate cleaning and disinfection, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette.

☐ Screen employees and contractors before coming into the office:

   ☐ Send home any employee or contractor who has any of the following new or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19:

   - Cough
   - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
   - Chills
   - Repeated shaking with chills
   - Muscle pain
   - Headache

   - Sore throat
   - Loss of taste or smell
   - Diarrhea
   - Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
   - Known close contact with a person who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19

☐ Do not allow employees with new or worsening signs or symptoms listed above to return to work until:

- In the case of an employee or contractor who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to work when all three of the following criteria are met: at least 3 days (72 hours) have passed *since recovery* (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications); and the individual has *improvement* in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and at least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*; or

- In the case of an employee or contractor who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to work until the individual has completed the same three-step criteria listed above; or

- If the employee or contractor has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to work before completing the above self-isolation period, the individual must obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis.

☐ Do not allow an employee or contractor with known close contact to a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 to return to work until the end of the 14 day self-quarantine period from the last date of exposure (with an exception granted for healthcare workers and critical infrastructure workers).

☐ Have employees and contractors wash or sanitize their hands upon entering the office.

☐ Have employees and contractors maintain at least 6 feet separation from other individuals. If such distancing is not feasible, other measures such as face covering, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, cleanliness, and sanitation should be rigorously practiced.

☐ Consider implementing a staggered workforce, such as alternating days or weeks for different groups of employees and/or contractors coming into the workplace.

☐ Continue to encourage individuals to work remotely if possible.

☐ If an employer provides a meal for employees and/or contractors, the employer is recommended to have the meal individually packed for each individual.

☐ Consistent with the actions taken by many employers across the state, consider having all employees and contractors wear cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth). If available, employees should consider wearing non-medical grade face masks.

Health protocols for your facilities:

☐ Regularly and frequently clean and disinfect any regularly touched surfaces, such as doorknobs, tables, chairs, and restrooms.

☐ **Limit the use of standard-size elevators to four individuals at a time, each located at a different corner of the elevator to avoid close contact. Masks should be worn in elevators. Utilize touchpoint cleaning and nanoseptic button covers if appropriate. For individuals not wishing to ride an elevator, ensure stairways are available for use. As appropriate, individuals subject to the Americans with Disabilities Act may ride the elevator alone or accompanied by the individual's caregiver.**

☐ Disinfect any items that come into contact with customers.

☐ Make hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, soap and water, or similar disinfectant readily available to employees, contractors, and customers.

☐ Consider placing readily visible signage at the office to remind everyone of best hygiene practices.

☐ For offices with more than 10 employees and/or contractors present at one time, consider having an individual wholly or partially dedicated to ensuring the health protocols adopted by the office are being successfully implemented and followed.