

WISCONSIN

GUIDANCE ON PREPARING WORKPLACES FOR COVID-19



PROFESSIONAL SERVICES INDUSTRY

(COMMERCIAL OFFICE SPACES)



Measures implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly impacted building owners, landlords, tenants and operating businesses. Most professional service firms, particularly those that operate in an office setting, are now considering how best to aid in social distancing efforts and whether to de-densify workspace and seating arrangements to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 spread. With the emergence of COVID-19, the open design office concept so popular in recent years is coming into question. These modern office designs may actually make it harder to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and may require significant changes for the office to reopen. The COVID-19 pandemic could accelerate the growing trend of working from home, especially now that online meeting technology makes it possible to collaborate remotely—and this could prompt companies to reduce their overall office space needs.

There is no “one-size-fits-all” approach for reopening the professional services sector and the commercial office spaces these firms occupy. The following guide highlights the current best practices in protecting the employees, customers, delivery workers and the building from the risk of COVID-19 spread. In addition, please see the **“General Guidance for All Businesses”** document for guidance that applies to all industries, and please consult the other available industry guides as relevant for your specific business type.

Recommendations for the Professional Services Industry (Commercial Office Spaces)

Social distancing

- ▶ Allow employees to work from home if possible.
- ▶ Limit the number of individuals in the building to those who need to be on site.
- ▶ Redesign workspaces to ensure that on-site employees are separated by at least six feet.
- ▶ Ensure that social distancing is also maintained in hallways and other common areas.
- ▶ Limit in-person meetings as much as possible.
- ▶ If you must have an in-person meeting, limit the number of attendees and meet in a room large enough to allow for at least six feet between all participants.

- ▶ Host large team/staff meetings via videoconference rather than in person.
- ▶ Use electronic signatures to meet signoff requirements and avoid close contact.
- ▶ Encourage clients/customers to connect via phone call or videoconference.



PROTECT



WASH OFTEN



DISINFECT



CAUTION



Employee health and hygiene

- ▶ Employees who have a fever or other symptoms of COVID-19 should be instructed to stay home.
- ▶ Encourage clients/customers to connect via phone call or videoconference. Maintain an adequate supply of paper goods, soap and hand sanitizer to allow proper hand hygiene among employees.
- ▶ Provide tissues for proper cough/sneeze etiquette and no-touch disposal receptacles.

Clean and disinfect

- ▶ Maintain an adequate supply of cleaning and disinfection products.
- ▶ If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- ▶ Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces, such as doorknobs, light switches, countertops, printers, copiers and bathroom fixtures.
- ▶ Consider establishing a cleaning and disinfection team to conduct these activities on a regular schedule each day.
- ▶ Instruct your employees not to share equipment such as phones, computers keyboards, mice.
- ▶ Provide personal pens, markers and other routine work supplies for each individual.

Face masks and cloth face coverings

- ▶ Supply face masks or cloth face coverings for all employees in the office.
- ▶ Employers should recommend use of face masks or cloth face coverings by employees when social distancing is not feasible in the work environment. Usage may be recommended for public facing activities.
- ▶ Instruct your employees in how to properly put on and remove a face mask or cloth face covering. The [CDC](#) illustrates how to properly wear a face covering and has several tutorials for how to make one.

Engineering controls

- ▶ Increase ventilation rates.
- ▶ Increase the percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system.

Personnel movement in the facility

- ▶ In order to allow employees to move around the facility without having to touch doors or knobs, consider removing doors or keeping them open where possible, or adding automatic doors or foot pulls.
- ▶ Consider one-way circulation routes through the office.
- ▶ Instruct employees to avoid hallway conversations and interactions.



Break rooms

- ▶ Modify break room seating to ensure that employees cannot sit within six feet of one another.
- ▶ Frequently clean and disinfect tables, chairs/benches, handles, faucets, countertops, refrigerators and microwaves.
- ▶ Consider suspending coffee service.
- ▶ Have sanitizing wipes readily available in break rooms to clean common surfaces.
- ▶ With some employees working remotely, determine if any office spaces can be repurposed for additional break room space.

Employee training, support and communication

- ▶ Communicate with workers about actions being taken to prevent COVID-19 exposure through routine meetings, postings (including electronic postings) and the company website.
- ▶ Post signage to remind your employees of safe practices for social distancing, hand hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette.
- ▶ Provide refresher training for employees on proper handwashing, social distancing, employee illness reporting and any other procedural changes the company has implemented in response to COVID-19.
- ▶ Train employees in how to recognize areas or practices that pose a risk for spreading the virus and define a process to quickly review and provide mitigation strategies in these areas. Include a recognizing/reporting module in your COVID-19 response plan.
- ▶ Consider designating one or more employees to monitor changes in workplace guidance.



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