
Flathead County COVID-19 Business Planning Guide



April 2020

Flathead City-County Health Department



Avoid Close Contact

It is recommended that individuals outside of direct family units stay **6 feet apart** from one another in public settings. This can be accomplished in many different ways depending on the particular situation. Examples include:

- Space out lines while waiting to check out at grocery or retail stores.
- Rearrange sales floor to provide for adequate space between customers.
 - Move clothing racks farther apart.
- Space out seating options in restaurants.
 - Remove tables
 - Eliminate waiting areas
- Limit the number of people entering establishments at any given time.
- Close areas where congregation occurs (e.g. break rooms).
- Use reservations (e.g. for services, appointments, meals, etc.).
- Only allow seating in every other row
- Increase physical space between employees at the worksite
- Increase physical space between employees and customers (e.g. drive through, partitions)
- Deliver services remotely (e.g. phone, video, or web)
- Deliver products through curbside pick-up or delivery.
- Consider reserving special hours for at-risk populations.

Cloth Face Masks

Studies have shown people may be contagious before they show any signs or symptoms of COVID-19. The CDC recommends wearing a cloth face covering while in public to protect people around you and yourself. Surgical masks and N95s are currently in short supply and should be reserved for healthcare professionals.

- Provide masks to employees.
- Require employee mask use.
- Train staff on appropriate use of face coverings.
 - Refrain from touching eyes, nose, and mouth while putting on and removing face masks.
 - Wash hands immediately after taking off facemasks.
 - Facemasks should be routinely washed depending on frequency of use.
- Consider laundering facemasks for all employees.

Hand Washing

Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds often. If hand washing is unavailable, use a hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.

Hand washing should especially be completed after the following activities:

- After you have been in a public place
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Before eating

Discourage handshaking – encourage other noncontact methods of greeting.

Provide Hand Sanitizing Stations:

- Place hand sanitizers in multiple locations to encourage hand hygiene:
 - At store entries
 - At check-out counters
- Place posters that encourage hand hygiene at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
 - Restrooms
 - Check-out areas
 - Entryways
- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles.

Cleaning and Disinfection

Clean all “high touch” areas such as counters, toilets, doorknobs, tables, benches, chairs, registers, card machines, etc. Read the back of the disinfectant container to ensure that the product works on coronaviruses, or check the EPA list on the CDC website.

- Clean more often if surfaces become visibly soiled.
- Clean any surfaces that may have blood, body fluids, and or secretions on them.
- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning surfaces.
- Dishes and eating utensils should be cleaned with dish soap and hot water.
- Use of a dishwasher also provides sufficient cleaning.

Implement Cleaning Procedures

- Routinely clean high-touch areas and keep track of cleaning schedule.
- Implement new employee cleaning policies (e.g. cleaning workstations before and after every shift).
- Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (e.g. doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks, other work tools and equipment) can be wiped down by employees before each use.

Monitor for symptoms and stay at home if sick.

- Consider implementing temperature checks and/or symptom screenings for employees.
- Postpone all nonessential business travel.
- Encourage all staff and patrons to stay at home if sick.
- Ensure that sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of and understand these policies.
- Employers that do not currently offer sick leave to some or all of their employees may want to draft non-punitive “emergency sick leave” policies.

Assess Your Essential Functions:

- Identify alternate supply chains for critical goods and services. Upon reopening, some goods and services may be in higher demand or unavailable.
- Implement plans to continue your essential business functions in case you experience higher than usual absenteeism.
- Prepare to institute flexible workplace and leave policies.
- Cross-train employees to perform essential functions so the workplace can operate even if key employees are absent.

Considerations for Vulnerable Employees and Customers:

The following groups are considered higher risk for developing severe complications from COVID-19:

- People aged 65 and over
- People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility
- People who are immunocompromised
- People with underlying medical conditions

Vulnerable populations are still encouraged to stay home as much as possible.