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Safer at Home Phase Three Hotel and Meeting Facilities Guidelines

Use of Face Coverings

All patrons in the Commonwealth aged ten and over shall when entering, exiting, traveling through, and spending time inside the settings listed below cover their mouth and nose with a face covering, as described and recommended by the CDC.

Businesses must strictly adhere to the physical distancing guidelines, enhanced cleaning and disinfection practices, and enhanced workplace safety practices provided in the "Guidelines for All Business Sectors" document. Virginia Department of Health and Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services regulated facilities must continue to follow requirements related to prohibiting sick employees in the workplace, strict handwashing practices, and procedures and practices to clean and sanitize surfaces.

Guidelines for social gatherings (please refer to the full guidelines)

Social gatherings should be limited to 50% occupancy of the event space, if applicable, or 250 participants, whichever is less.

- Limit the occupancy of spaces to ensure that six feet of physical distance can be maintained between all organizers, staff, volunteers, and attendees who are not members of the same household.
- Reconfigure seating areas to allow six feet of physical distance between individuals by eliminating or closing select tables or seating areas, or by spreading them out to allow for adequate spacing.

Physical Distancing Best Practices

- Establish policies and practices for maintaining appropriate physical distance between persons not living in the same household. Maintain at least ten feet of distance for establishments where exercise activities, singing, or cheering is performed, and at least six feet of distance for all other settings. (See sector-specific guidelines below for more detailed information on public engagement.)

- Provide clear communication and signage for physical distancing in areas where individuals may congregate, especially at entrances, in seating areas, and in check-out lines.
- Limit the occupancy of physical spaces to ensure that adequate physical distancing may be maintained. (See sector-specific guidelines for more detailed information.)
- Encourage telework whenever possible.
- For those businesses where telework is not feasible, temporarily move or stagger workstations to ensure six feet of separation between co-workers and between members of the public.
- Limit in-person work-related gatherings, including conferences, trade shows, and trainings.
- When in-person meetings need to occur, keep meetings as short as possible, limit the number of employees in attendance, and use physical distancing practices.

Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfection Best Practices

- Practice routine cleaning and disinfection of high contact areas and hard surfaces, including check out stations and payment pads, store entrance push/pull pads, door knobs/handles, dining tables/chairs, light switches, handrails, restrooms, floors, and equipment. Follow [CDC Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection](#) and use an EPA-approved disinfectant to clean. For high contact areas, routinely disinfect surfaces at least every 2 hours. Certain surfaces and objects in public spaces, such as shopping carts and point of sale keypads, should be cleaned and disinfected before each use.
- To the extent tools or equipment must be shared, provide access to and instruct workers to use an [EPA-approved disinfectant](#) to clean items before and after use.
- Provide a place for employees and customers to wash hands with soap and water, or provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers containing at least 60% alcohol. (See sector-specific guidelines for more detailed information.)
- When developing staff schedules, implement additional short breaks to increase the frequency with which staff can wash hands with soap and water. Alternatively, consider providing alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol so that workers can frequently sanitize their hands.
- Provide best hygiene practices to employees on a regular basis, including washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and practicing respiratory etiquette protocols. A CDC training video is available here: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/videos.html>

Enhanced Workplace Safety Best Practices

- Prior to a shift and on days employees are scheduled to work, employers should screen employees prior to starting work. Employees should also self-monitor their symptoms by self-taking of temperature to check for fever and utilizing the questions provided in the [VDH Interim Guidance for COVID -19 Daily Screening of Employees](#) before reporting to work. For employers with established occupational health programs, employers can consider measuring temperature and assessing symptoms of employees prior to starting work/before each shift.

CDC considers a person to have a fever when he or she has a measured temperature of 100.4° F (38° C) or greater, feels warm to the touch, or gives a history of feeling feverish.

- Implement practices such as those described in [VDH Interim Guidance for COVID -19 Daily Screening of Employees](#) for examples of a screening questionnaire. A sample symptom monitoring log is available in this Interim Guidance.
- Instruct employees who are sick to stay at home and not report to work. If an employee becomes ill or presents signs of illness, follow [CDC What to Do if You Are Sick](#) guidance. Employers should post signage in the common languages of the employees telling employees not to come to work when sick.
- Develop or adopt flexible sick leave policies to ensure that sick employees do not report to work. Policies should allow employees to stay home if they are sick with COVID-19, if they need to self-quarantine due to exposure, and if they need to care for a sick family member. Employers should recommend that employees follow CDC guidance on [If You Are Sick or Caring For Someone](#).
- Some employees are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. These vulnerable employees include individuals over age 65 and those with underlying medical conditions. Vulnerable employees should be encouraged to self-identify and employers should take particular care to reduce their risk of exposure, while making sure to be compliant with relevant Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) regulations.
 - Consider offering vulnerable employees duties that minimize their contact with customers and other employees (e.g., restocking shelves rather than working as a cashier), if agreed to by the employee.
 - Protect employees at higher risk for severe illness by supporting and encouraging options to telework.
 - If implementing health checks, conduct them safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations. Confidentiality should be respected.
 - Other information on civil rights protections for workers related to COVID-19 is available [here](#).
- Designate a staff person to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. Employees should know who this person is and how to contact them.
- Implement staggered shifts for both work periods and break periods. Consider cohort scheduling where groups of employees only work with employees in their group.
- Limit the number of employees in break rooms and stagger breaks to discourage gatherings.
- Use messaging boards or digital messaging for pre-shift meeting information.
- If the building has not been occupied for the last 7 days, there are additional public health considerations that should be considered, such as taking measures to ensure the safety of your building water system. However, it is not necessary to clean ventilation systems other than routine maintenance as part of reducing the risk of coronavirus transmission.

- Establish a relationship with your local health department and know who to contact for questions.
- For healthcare facilities, additional guidance is provided on CDC's Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities.

Other References from Industry Groups

American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA) *Safe Stay* initiative:

[Enhanced Industry-Wide Hotel Cleaning Standards](#)

Employee & Guest Health

- *Washing Hands & Hand Sanitizer:* CDC guidelines shall govern the duty of all hotel employees to engage in frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizer. Washing hands with soap and water is the preferable method. In situations where soap/water is not available, alcohol-based sanitizer is recommended. Hand sanitizer dispensers shall include no less than 60% alcohol content, where available, and touchless where possible. As available, dispensers shall be placed at key guest and employee entrances and contact areas. At a minimum, this will include lobby reception areas and employee entrances, but could also include any other reception areas, entire hotel lobby areas, restaurant entrances, meeting spaces, elevator landings, pools, exercise areas and other public areas as applicable to the property.
- *Front of the House Signage:* During all times in which the usage of masks is recommended by the CDC and/or other local health authorities, health and hygiene reminders shall be placed at high-traffic areas on property, including the front lobby area at a minimum, indicating the proper way to wear, handle and dispose of masks.
- *Back of the House Signage:* Signage shall be posted at a minimum in the employee break room and cafeteria, and other areas employees frequently enter or exit. Signage will remind employees of the proper way to wear, handle and dispose masks, use gloves, wash hands, sneeze and to avoid touching their faces.
- *Employee & Guest Health Concerns:* Responding swiftly and reporting to local health officials any presumed cases of COVID-19 at the hotel property shall be a staff-wide requirement. Employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 shall remain or return home. While at work, employees who notice a coworker or guest exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 shall immediately contact a manager. At a minimum, hotels shall follow CDC guidelines for employers and businesses, including instructing employees to self-isolate for the required amount of time, as defined by the CDC, from the onset of symptoms and be symptom-free for at least three days without medication. Well-being checks of all employees, including physical temperature checks where required by law, shall be carried out in accordance with CDC guidelines on employee health checks.
- *Case Notification:* At minimum, confirmed cases of COVID-19 shall be immediately reported to local health authorities in accordance with appropriate actions recommended by the CDC.

Employee's Responsibilities

- *Hand Cleaning:* If not wearing protective gloves, all employees shall follow CDC guidance regarding handwashing. Employees shall wash their hands for at least 20 seconds, or use sanitizer when a sink is not available, after any of the following activities: using the restroom, sneezing, touching the face, cleaning, smoking, eating, drinking, accepting items from a guest (ID, cash, credit card, key card), taking a break, and before a shift and as needed throughout the shift. When possible, employees shall wear gloves for added protection and sanitation efforts. Proper hand hygiene, in accordance with CDC guidelines, should be followed prior to and after removing the gloves.
- *COVID-19 Training:* All employees shall receive COVID-19 safety and facility sanitation protocols training recommendations from the CDC with more comprehensive training, consistent with the CDC, for employees with frequent guest contact including Housekeeping, Food & Beverage, Public Area Department, Hotel Operations, Security, Valet/Door/Bell Services, and Maintenance/Engineering.
- *Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):* CDC recommendations along with federal and local government regulations shall dictate appropriate PPE to be worn by employees. PPE, along with appropriate training for use and disposal, shall be made available to any employee upon request. Please refer to OSHA for more information.

Cleaning Products & Protocols

Cleaning products and protocols shall include EPA-approved disinfectants that meet CDC requirements for use and effectiveness against viruses, bacteria and other airborne and bloodborne pathogens. For more information, please refer to the CDC guidelines on disinfecting buildings and facilities.

- *Public Spaces and Communal Areas:* Cleaning and disinfecting shall be frequent (multiple times per day) with an emphasis on frequent contact with hard non-porous surfaces including, but not limited to, front desk check-in counters, bell desks, elevators and elevator buttons, door handles, public bathrooms, vending machines, ice machines, room keys and locks, ATMs, escalator and stair handrails, gym equipment, pool seating and surrounding areas, dining surfaces and all seating areas.
- *Guest Rooms:* Cleaning and disinfecting protocols will require that particular attention is paid to high-touch, hard nonporous items including television remote controls, toilet seats and handles, door and furniture handles, water faucet handles, nightstands, telephones, in-room control panels, light switches, temperature control panels, alarm clocks, luggage racks and flooring. The frequency of room cleaning during a guest's stay may be altered based on guest requirements.
- *Laundry:* Linens, towels and laundry shall be washed in accordance with CDC guidelines, including washing items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Where possible, launder items using the warmest permissible water setting for the items and dry items completely. Dirty linen shall be bagged in the guest room to eliminate excess contact while being transported to the laundry facility.
- *Back of the House:* Cleaning and disinfecting of all high touch areas shall occur in accordance with CDC guidelines, including at least twice per day in high traffic areas. Handwashing stations and access to hand sanitizer should be convenient and highly visible.
- *Shared Equipment:* Shared tools and equipment shall be disinfected after each shift or transfer to a new employee.

- *Room Recovery Protocol:* In the event of a presumptive case of COVID-19 the affected guest room shall be removed from service and quarantined. The guest room shall not be returned to service until undergoing an enhanced cleaning and disinfecting utilizing EPA approved products within CDC guidelines.
- *Food & Beverage:* Food and beverage service shall reduce in-person contact with guests and buffet service and also minimize dining items for increased sanitation. Traditional room service shall be replaced with a no-contact delivery method. Traditional buffet service shall be limited, but when offered, it should be served by an attendant wearing personal protection equipment (PPE), and utensils should be washed and changed more frequently. Portion controls should be emphasized to reduce food exposed for long periods. Sneeze and cough screens shall be present at all food displays. Minimal items should be placed on guest tables to allow for effective disinfection in between each guest, including condiments, silverware, glassware, napkins, etc. For certain segments, the use of prepackaged foods and 'grab & go' items shall be the preferred method of food delivery.

Physical Distancing

- *Physical Distancing & Queuing:* As recommended by the CDC's social distancing guidelines, guests shall be advised to practice physical distancing by standing at least six feet away from other groups of people not traveling with them, including any area where guests or employees queue. Such areas shall be clearly marked for appropriate physical distancing, and where possible, encourage one-way guest flow with marked entrances and exits. When applicable, lobby furniture and other public seating areas will be reconfigured to promote social distancing.
- *Guest Rooms:* In anticipation of individual concerns of guests, housekeeping shall not enter a guest room during a stay unless specifically requested, or approved, by the guest, or to comply with established safety protocols. Housekeeping shall maintain the practice of cleaning rooms thoroughly following check-out.
- *Meeting and Convention Spaces:* Meeting and banquet arrangements shall allow for physical distancing between guests based on CDC recommendations.
- *Hotel Front Desk, Concierge, and Parking Services:* Front desk agents shall practice social distancing including utilizing every other workstation to ensure separation between employees whenever applicable and possible. The use of technology to reduce direct contact with guests, lobby population and front desk queue is encouraged, where feasible. In addition, contactless payment processes are encouraged, and when not available, employees should minimize contact as much as possible. Self-parking options should be emphasized, where possible. If valet service is provided, disinfecting of contact points within the vehicle is required. In addition, van and shuttle service shall be limited, and disinfecting of contact points will be required.
- *Pools:* Social distancing, disinfecting and management protocols and processes for pool and beach areas shall be conducted in accordance with CDC guidelines on aquatic venues, including public pools, hot tubs and water playgrounds.
- *Back of the House:* Physical distancing among all employees shall be practiced in employee dining rooms, uniform control areas, training classrooms, shared office spaces, and other high-density areas.