

# Spokane County Government Recovery Safety Planning – COVID-19

May 11, 2020

## Objective:

To provide consistent and clear direction to County departments on how to recover following multiple closures and changed operations because of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Background & Timing:

Spokane County is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for its employees. As the County transitions, back to more normal day-to-day operations, we must take steps to help maintain the gains we have achieved against COVID-19, including:

- Limiting illness throughout the workplace and ensuring that sick employees stay home or go home if they are ill.
- Accommodating appropriate social distancing between employees and between employee and citizens/customers.
- Providing for appropriate hygiene practices, including hand washing and hand sanitizing as well as use of protective equipment such as masks and gloves.
- Providing for appropriate cleaning practices, especially in common areas.
- Asking employees to be accountable for following health guidance and restrictions.

The timeline for this transition is based on the lifting of restrictions and guidance provided by the Governor, the State of Washington, health officials, and County leaders. Importantly, work from home orders for non-essential personnel would have to be eased or lifted for the transition to proceed.

Preparations to accommodate necessary operational changes should start now so departments are ready to begin their operational transition when conditions allow. Departments are encouraged to draft a written safety plan specific for their work spaces, operations and services. Written Safety Plans describe the process for identifying the physical and health hazards in the workplace that could harm workers, the procedures to reduce the exposure related to injury/illness and/or accidents and the steps to take when an injury/illness and/or accidents occur. If an employee has any concerns about the recovery process, they can reach out to their supervisor, Human Resources and/or Risk Management.

When considering the process of restoring your services and operations, please consider the safety practices listed below when developing your written safety plan:

## Countywide Practices:

### Limiting illness in County Facilities

- Research availability/procurement of hand held touchless digital thermometers and determine viability for temperature screening prior to entering County work places. (Are hand-held digital thermometers available and cost-effective? Is this self-screening or supervisor conducted?)
- Require employees who are sick to stay home and provide protocol for those who are directly exposed to a person with COVID-19. (Revisit the initial HR guidance on this.)
- Consider other measures that could help limit illness in County facilities.

## Contact Tracing

- Implement requirement that staff to swipe their security access ID Card when initially arriving to work, regardless if the access door is unlocked. (If requested, Electronic Access System Reports can be easily generated)
- Consider using “Time Sheets” or create a Daily Log to document staff attendance at non-electronic security system facilities
- Consider creating a Daily Log to document visitors, customers, vendors and contractors.
- Maintain Daily Logs for 30 days.

***Note: The Health Department will be responsible to identify contacts of individuals that have been exposed to COVID-19 and isolate them to break the chain of transmission of this virus.***

## Social distancing

- Prepare public counters for in-person services.
  - Consider appropriate signage and locations.
  - Consider the use of plexiglass-type dividers to protect workers and the public.
  - Consider using distancing dots or markers to ensure people stand 6-feet apart in line.
- Accommodate social distancing of employees in their work locations.
  - If physical space doesn’t allow for spread of work stations, consider staggered shifts, non-traditional shift schedules, work from home, and other strategies to supplement physical distancing.
- Reassess maximum occupancy for conference rooms and meeting spaces to accommodate social distancing.
  - Make sure you have sufficient room to hold an in-person meeting.
  - Continue to offer online meeting attendance to reduce size of in-person meetings.
- Require proper hygiene and social distancing practices in exercise facilities.
  - This includes but is not limited to washing hands for a minimum of 20 seconds, practicing appropriate cough and sneeze etiquette, and wiping down the equipment before and after use.

## Hygiene Practices

- Post appropriate signage
- Accommodate hand washing or use of hand sanitizer as part of regular employee breaks or following tasks with a risk of exposure.
- Provide additional cleaning supplies and possible protective equipment like masks\* and gloves.
- Provide guidance on when such equipment must be and can be used. (Do we make people wear masks, for example, and in what areas?)
- Provide disposable tissues to help people cover coughs and sneezes.

***Note: The use of “cloth” washable face masks are acceptable PPE at most general worksite locations. Surgical and N95 style masks are still in high demand for those high-risk exposure work areas such as medical treatment facilities and for first responders only.***

***County workers are encouraged to use personally owned cloth masks in the workplace; however, departments should provide workers with masks when determined that this form of PPE will be required in identified areas of the workplace (i.e. pinch points in locations where the 6-foot social distancing can’t be achieved or maintained.)***

## **Cleaning Practices**

- Protocol for cleaning public areas and areas where employees gather like conference rooms on a regular basis.
- Follow Facilities Department Deep Cleaning protocol after notification of an employee who tests positive for COVID-19.

## **Employee Accountability**

- Expect every employee to respect social distancing measures
- Expect employees to practice appropriate cough and sneeze etiquette.
- Expect employees to regularly wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds.
  - If hand washing is not available, use hand sanitizer made with at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Expect employees to provide feedback and express concerns through their supervisor, department head, Human Resources and/or Risk Management.

## **Elevators:**

- Use the stairs as much as possible when traveling between floors.
- Consider reducing occupancy as much as possible to limit the risk of exposure.
- Consider 2 person use limit and at one time to maintain as much social distancing as possible.
- Recommend wearing masks during use.
- If use is required, face the door or away from others to prevent direct face-to-face contact.
- Practice appropriate coughing and sneezing etiquette prior to use of elevator.
- If possible wash hands or use hand sanitizer immediately after using the elevators.
- Post signage with precautions at all elevators.

## **Conference Rooms:**

- Limit the number of people physically present at the meeting based on social distancing standards.
- Consider virtual meetings (Teleconference, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, etc.) when possible.
- Keep a six-foot distance between the members of the group.
- Practice appropriate cough and sneeze etiquette.
- Consider using a mask.

## **Breaks and Lunch:**

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after eating.
- Minimize the number of people using breakrooms and areas at the same time.
- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer following all breaks, prior to returning to work.
- If a common break space is used, consider staggering breaks and lunches to reduce large gatherings.

## **Boards, Commissions, and Public Meetings:**

- Practice social distancing in meetings.
- Continue to offer alternative ways to virtually attend the meeting.
- Adhere to revised capacities for a meeting space based on social distancing.
- Practice appropriate cough and sneeze etiquette.
- Consider appropriate PPE (Masks).
- If possible wash hands before and after the meeting.
- Use hand sanitizer when hand washing facilities are not available.

- Restrict loitering in areas near the meeting.

***Note: In-person Public Meetings are currently prohibited through May 31, 2020 however, County leaders are encouraged to develop an appropriate safety plan to mitigate potential exposure when restrictions are eased or lifted.***

### **Specific Departmental Plans:**

Departments should assess and incorporate the following when developing specific plans for their work areas and employees:

- Consider changes needed to continue to accommodate essential work done by essential employees.
  - Do current accommodations, scheduling, etc., continue to make sense?
- Plan for transitioning staff from telecommuting and back into County facilities.
  - Slowly phase employees back to work in their regular work locations.
  - Start with a few employees and then bring back more as restrictions decrease and safety measures increase.
  - If work spaces can be separated, department should try to accommodate this distancing.
  - Consider continuing staggered shifts, non-traditional shift schedules, alternating days in the office and work from home, work from home, and other strategies to supplement physical distancing.
  - Consider continuing work from home strategies for those employees considered “high risk for COVID-19” and those with child care challenges.
- Evaluate the need for safety changes in your work spaces/facilities.
  - Risk Management Loss Control Specialists are available for site hazard assessment walk-throughs to provides recommendations and guidance.
- Develop a plan for the return of regular services or long-term modified services.
  - Review all services provided and develop plans to restore your services back to normal operations or some other long-term strategy.
  - Continue to offer appropriate services online to decrease the need for direct interaction with the public
  - Consider how to communicate vital information to your customers, the public, others.
- Incorporate initial training that includes at a minimum: the use of PPE, social distancing, handwashing, coughing/sneezing etiquette and sanitation protocol in the workplace. This training should be conducted for all staff routinely thereafter.

### **Reference Documents:**

Guidance on the County’s restoration safety plan was sought from a variety of sources including:

- Facilities Department COVID-19 Clearing Protocol
- Regional Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Site Safety Packet
- <https://www.lni.wa.gov/forms-publications/F414-164-000.pdf>
- OSHA: <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>