

REOPEN HOUSTON

Safely



Disclaimer

This report was created by the Greater Houston Partnership to support the Reopen Houston Safely initiative. The guidance that follows is the result of a consultative planning effort to address the COVID-19 crisis that included business and community leaders. These recommendations are based on the facts and data available at this time. They are intended to provide a roadmap for our region's industry sectors during a time of great uncertainty. These best practices are intended for general information purposes only and not intended to be, nor should they be interpreted as, legal or entity-specific advice. This document contains links to non-Greater Houston Partnership websites that are created and controlled by other organizations. We claim no responsibility for the content of any linked website, or any link contained therein. Businesses should observe all orders and guidelines offered by government officials. In addition, many national trade associations have issued detailed industry guidelines for reopening; companies should consult these as they develop their own reopening plans.



A NOTE FROM LEADERSHIP



Since the COVID-19 pandemic reached Houston earlier this spring, leaders and residents across the greater Houston region have been met with the unprecedented task of battling an invisible, deadly foe in the virus, while also facing an economic shock unseen in our lifetimes.

Local elected officials wisely issued Stay Home, Work Safe orders early on as the virus spread across our community. Fortunately, these orders were taken seriously by residents and the business community. As we know from the experts in the healthcare community, these bold actions have thus far helped our healthcare workers and first responders mitigate the spread of the coronavirus on our community.

These guidelines and resources are intended to support businesses across the greater Houston region as they reopen and remain focused on the steps needed to resume work safely, sustainably and successfully.

This report uses the frameworks of federal and state guidance and considers the unique healthcare conditions and industry needs in the Houston region. The Guidelines for Opening Up America Again and the Governor's Strike Force to Open Texas Report are both important documents that business leaders should consult.

As our region is an interconnected economy of seven million residents across many counties, it is essential that communities across the area coordinate this reopen effort in a meaningful way to ensure success can be achieved for all industries and individuals.

This guide was informed and shaped by multidisciplinary working groups of business and community leaders to ensure we reopen in a way that is inclusive of all points of view and will get people from all our communities back to work. We are grateful to those who participated in this process.

Regards,

BOBBY TUDOR
Board Chair

MARC WATTS
Chair, Reopen Houston Safely

BOB HARVEY
President and CEO

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GUIDING FRAMEWORK

As we developed this blueprint for restarting Houston's economy safely, the Greater Houston Partnership worked on behalf of the business community and other stakeholders to develop guidelines and resources for businesses resuming work safely, sustainably and successfully.

Our work was guided by this framework:

1

Set a balanced tone

Balance public health considerations while promoting economic activity in a phased and gradual approach to guard against subsequent spikes in infections. In the event of a spike in infections, a re-tightening of restrictions may be needed.

2

Recognize Houston's economic diversity

Reflect Houston's unique economic characteristics and account for the varying risk profiles across and within industries when providing guidance to employers on how to maintain a safe work environment.

3

Acknowledge role of business

Recognize the vital role businesses play in enacting specific measures to keep their workforce safe and thereby protecting the entire community.

4

Make Coordination a Priority

Prioritize a high degree of coordination between all stakeholders and establish clear and consistent communication directed at employers, workers and the community in order to achieve maximum success.

5

Consider access and equity

Prioritize considerations related to vulnerable populations, equity and access.

6

Prepare for the long term

Acknowledge the lasting impacts of COVID-19 and the long-term importance of developing a public health infrastructure for adequate testing and contact tracing during this period without a vaccine.

FEEDBACK

from the Industry Working Groups

To prepare for the region's reopening, the Partnership convened 70 Houston regional business and community leaders through working group meetings to define how Houston can reopen the economy safely, sustainably and successfully. The members of eight working groups represented businesses both large and small and spanning key industry sectors. Their feedback defined success for reopening that will prioritize public health, maintain essential operations, drive small businesses' return to work, and ensure consumer and employee confidence. The feedback and takeaways are intended for general informational purposes only, and not intended to be, nor should they be interpreted as, legal or entity-specific advice.

REOPEN PROTOCOL AND REQUIREMENTS

Working group participants, regardless of company size and sector, generally agreed that reopen protocols and requirements should be industry-driven to minimize conflicts between guidelines. As Houston moves through the phases of reopening, these protocols should serve as guidelines for business-led outcomes rather than fixed, prescriptive measures that prevent businesses from developing the safest outcome for their workplace.

REOPEN PACE

Most participants highlighted the need for reopening to be data-driven and gradual. They noted essential businesses have continued operations throughout this crisis and learned how to implement necessary measures to protect their employees and customers. Small businesses and other employers granted permission from the state to reopen may begin to return to work, however, many will monitor the performance of other industry members, COVID-19 infection rate reductions and improvements in testing, before returning to work.

PUBLIC CONFIDENCE AND EDUCATION

Public and employee confidence in reopening is essential as government issues reopening guidance. Without adequate consumer demand and employee confidence in workplace safety, businesses, particularly SMEs, will not be able to sustain operations. Local government and media could and should play a stronger role in boosting public understanding and confidence in the safeguarding measures that have been implemented.

VIABILITY OF SMALL BUSINESSES, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND HIGH TOUCH

Small businesses, high touch businesses, and social services may be challenged in navigating the complexity of reopening. Many will be challenged financially when reopened given the impacts to their consumers/clients and stringent requirements in serving customers (e.g., social distancing). Until pre-COVID demand returns, strong support will be needed to help these sectors navigate reopening, ensure adequate access to PPE and sanitization supplies, and access financial assistance, particularly after federal assistance expires. Regress and re-closure would be financially devastating for small businesses.

BUSINESS COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION

Large businesses in essential industries, particularly those in energy and manufacturing, are well-equipped, resourced, and have demonstrated experience in maintaining their operations responsibly. These businesses can be incredibly valuable to small and high touch businesses, which may need support navigating reopening, by documenting and sharing best practices both within and beyond their industries. Participants highlighted a willingness to share best practices with small businesses.

CRITICAL SUPPORTS

Most businesses highlight that reopening for their employees will require critical support to mitigate COVID-19 risk. Readily available testing, contact tracing, public transit, childcare, PPE and sanitization supplies will be crucial elements to the critical support needed for employees.

INDUSTRY SPECIFIC FEEDBACK

Key Takeaways from the Industry Working Groups

OFFICE / KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

- Clear, fact-based communication with the public is critical to successfully reopening
- Landlords and tenants should determine respective responsibilities, and then clearly communicate them to all visitors of a building
- Expressed concerns about government over-regulation of phased reopening and community perception of workplace safety given the paucity of testing

LOGISTICS / TRANSPORTATION

- Prefer protocols to be viewed as targets rather than prescribed rules (e.g., ensure an outcome vs follow this measure to ensure an outcome)
- Large businesses can and should take an active role to support small businesses
- Build consumer confidence (e.g., make data and practices transparent) and sustain income for workers (e.g., allow work from home if needed)

SMALL BUSINESS

- Capital and resource requirements for small businesses are a major hurdle; most small business cannot survive the costs associated with multiple reopenings as a result of health regression
- Support needed to build consumer confidence and avoid additional financial loss

SOCIAL SERVICES

- While Social Services have operated during this crisis, their budgets and fundraising efforts have been stressed just as the community's needs for their services have increased
- Social Service organizations also highlighted challenges with accessing the PPE supply chain to providing critical support to a growing number of vulnerable clients/customers

HIGH TOUCH / CUSTOMER FACING

- Essential service retail (e.g., grocery stores) can provide critical learnings for reopening retail through sharing what they learned in implementing social distancing, cleaning and sanitation in their operations
- Food service and reopened retail service will need communications support as they adapt to social distancing, potential liquidity challenges and consumer confidence challenges

EDUCATION

- Need to build parent and teacher confidence in safety behind reopening (e.g., through contact tracing)
- Phase One reopen efforts will focus first on the most vulnerable students (e.g., special education students who need special nurses, students without Internet connectivity or with other challenges)
- Readiness for reopen depends on the age group of the students (e.g., more difficulties for K-12 students than for higher education institutions)

INDUSTRIAL AND CONSTRUCTION

- Since companies in this group operate in essential industries and have been nearly fully operational this whole time, either working on-site or remotely, they have become agile and adept to adjusting to the virus' evolution. Best practices have been created in this working group that should be shared within and beyond to other industries that are reopening
- For the segments of their operation that have been working remotely, most companies are hesitant to bring those employees back to an office environment until real and perceived safety is established
- More accurate antibody testing, increased childcare capacity, and safe public transportation are critical to support reopen

HEALTHCARE

- Reopen plans should be geared towards protecting vulnerable populations and managing hotspots
- Several critical enablers will be required for safe reopening (e.g., wide-spread testing, contact tracing, IT infrastructure)
- Decisions for opening should be based on clear facts and metrics
- Societal and individual compliance with established norms will be critical
- Hospital systems' readiness to open varies - some hospitals feel prepared to reopen, while others felt more time is needed
- Hospitals are closely collaborating to implement best practices

INDUSTRY WORKING GROUP PARTICIPANTS

The Greater Houston Partnership thanks these business and community leaders who participated in one of our eight industry working groups. Their valuable insights helped frame our thought process as we developed this plan. However, the recommendations we present here are solely those of the Greater Houston Partnership and do not necessarily reflect the views or guidance of any individual working group member.

INDUSTRIAL

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 Scott McClelland, H-E-B
 Chris Pappas, Pappas Restaurants, Inc.
 Jamey Rootes, Houston Texans
 Reid Ryan, Houston Astros
 Scott Silvas, Fifth Third Bank

LOCAL AND STATE PREPAREDNESS

As we navigate reopening Houston's economy, our state and local governments will need to develop and scale robust new capabilities to ensure a safe and manageable process. These capabilities are broadly outlined in the federal guidelines and include: testing and contact tracing, healthcare system

capacity, and advance planning. State and local government preparation and planning should be guided by health care experts in close coordination with businesses and community stakeholders and be supported by an intense public education effort to ensure a successful reopening.

Testing and Contact Tracing

Federal Guidance

- Ability to quickly set up safe and efficient screening and testing sites for symptomatic individuals and trace contacts of COVID+ results
- Ability to test Syndromic/ILI-indicated persons for COVID and trace contacts of COVID+ results
- Ensure sentinel surveillance sites are screening for asymptomatic cases and contacts for COVID+ results are traced (sites operate at locations that serve older individuals, lower-income Americans, racial minorities, and Native Americans)

Key Considerations

Expanded testing availability and easier access to testing for employees and employers

- Ensure broad availability of rapid and accurate testing with results within 24 hours for at least:
 - Those with symptoms
 - Healthcare and nursing home workers & first responders
 - Individuals in high-contact sectors (e.g., grocery stores)
 - People undergoing anesthesia
- Incorporate antibody testing as reliable tests become more available. Begin with health care workers
- Rapid and accurate test result data sharing among health care systems and city, county and state public health agencies needed. Data analytics capability to identify trends and potential hot spots should be developed at state and potentially local level
- Use symptom tracking strategies and special screening sites focused on finding asymptomatic cases (e.g. sentinel surveillance) to target testing in at-risk and vulnerable communities

- Establish a statewide coordinated test result tracking system
- Establish a statewide system and portal to assess and manage the supply chain for key testing reagents and report and anticipate supply shortages
- Clear guidance for employers on when and how to send employees to expanded local testing sites

Develop robust contact tracing at the state and local levels

- Establish a partnership between public health officials, private health providers and tech companies
 - Recruit, hire and train workers with necessary skills to be contact tracers
 - Incorporate suitable technology solutions as available
 - Statewide coordination and direction
- Train employers on techniques and best practices for workplace tracing

LOCAL AND STATE PREPAREDNESS

Healthcare System Capacity

Federal Guidance

- Ability to quickly and independently supply sufficient Personal Protective Equipment and critical medical equipment to handle dramatic surge in need
- Ability to surge ICU capacity

Key Considerations

Prepare to support longer term psychological/emotional needs related to trauma, isolation, anxiety, and other stressors

Establish a statewide system and portal to assess, manage and maintain the supply chain for PPE

Establish a scalable Public Health Support Service to support contact tracing and:

- Double the public health workforce
- Train and equip the workforce for emergency preparedness

- Significantly enhance surveillance capability
- University/private sector labs trained, equipped and ready for surge testing

Increase preparedness

- Permanent changes to resiliency and business continuity plans
- Regular response simulations, drills and re-training
- Explore public/private partnerships for rapid domestic manufacture of critical supplies
- Increase hospital surge plan preparation and drilling

Plan Development

Federal Guidance

- Protect the health and safety of workers in critical industries
- Protect the health and safety of those living and working in high-risk facilities (e.g., senior care facilities)
- Protect employees and users of mass transit
- Advise citizens regarding protocols for social distancing and face coverings
- Monitor conditions and immediately take steps to limit and mitigate any rebounds or outbreaks by restarting a phase or returning to an earlier phase, depending on severity

Key Considerations

Disseminate safety guidelines for businesses and workplace settings

- Should be based on types of risk, including but not limited to social distancing/capacity limitations, masking/PPE, disinfection, temperature checks, strategic testing, remote work, and shift/staffing plans.
- Unleash the ingenuity in our businesses and leverage industry associations to develop guidelines and best practices.

Set up a “seal of approval” system for businesses to self-certify that they are trained and comply with health protocols.

- This could include a certificate/sticker that businesses could prominently display for public review. This certification would serve as an incentive for businesses to take health protocols seriously and to instill public confidence in those businesses

Provide a protected platform for employees and customers to report violations anonymously.

- Step up capacity for investigation and enforcement to instill and maintain public confidence

Massive communication and education campaign in communities and the workplace on safety under a new normal living with COVID-19, including but not limited to:

- Social distancing
- Regular hand-washing
- Masking/use of PPE
- Frequent disinfecting of surfaces, tools and equipment
- Staggered shift work where practical
- Local regular temperature checks for employees
- Special outreach to at-risk and vulnerable populations



FEDERAL GUIDELINES

for Employers

On April 16, 2020, the White House issued the Opening Up America Again guidelines and established a three-phase approach to reopening.

THE PLAN CALLS ON BUSINESSES TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT APPROPRIATE POLICIES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES, AND INFORMED BY INDUSTRY BEST PRACTICES, REGARDING:

Social distancing and protective equipment

Temperature checks

Testing, isolating, and contact tracing

Sanitation

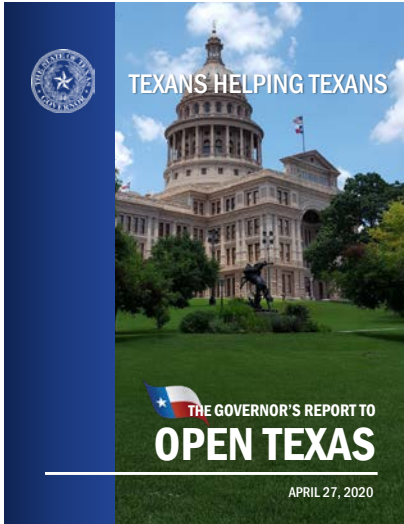
Use and disinfection of common and high-traffic areas

Business travel

Companies should monitor workforce for indicative symptoms and should not allow symptomatic people to physically return to work until cleared by a medical provider.

The plan also calls on state and local officials to tailor the application of these criteria to local circumstances (e.g., metropolitan areas that have suffered severe COVID outbreaks, rural and suburban areas where outbreaks have not occurred or have been mild). Additionally, where appropriate, the plan asks governors to work on a regional basis to satisfy these criteria and to progress through the phases.

Read more about the White House's Guidelines for Opening Up America Again here:
whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT'S REPORT TO OPEN TEXAS

On April 27, Texas Governor Greg Abbott released the Report to Open Texas, which lays out a plan for reopening several categories of closed businesses across the state in a phased approach. The plan calls for allowing many customer-oriented businesses, such as restaurants and retail stores, to reopen Friday, May 1, 2020 with restrictions on capacity in place. Governor Abbott plans to allow the opening of additional businesses in mid-May, provided Texas does not see a surge in cases.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOVERNOR ABBOTT'S EXECUTIVE ORDER GA-18, THE REPORT TO OPEN TEXAS LISTS SEVERAL RECOMMENDED PROTOCOLS:

Testing, self-isolating, and statewide contact tracing

Reopened businesses | 25 percent occupancy protocols (restaurants, retail, movies, museums, libraries)

Rural counties with low-COVID+ cases | 50 percent occupancy protocols

Social distancing and protective equipment

- Employee screening
- Sanitation; Use and disinfection of common and high-traffic areas

Monitor workforce for indicative symptoms.

Do not allow symptomatic people to physically return to work until cleared by a medical provider or until after the appropriate self-isolation period.

Read more about the Governor's Report to Open Texas here:
gov.texas.gov/organization/opentexas



WORK SAFE GUIDELINES

As the Houston region moves to reopen our economy, it is important that we do so safely, sustainability and successfully. To aid companies planning to reopen or expand their operations, the Greater Houston Partnership developed these principles to help these businesses develop plans to protect the health of their employees and customers by reducing the risk of transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

Businesses have a vested interest in getting this reopening right. All businesses should want to keep their employees

and customers safe — and feeling safe — as they return to “normal” operations.

This list of principles has been modified from the Partnership’s original Work Safe principles to reflect evolving federal and state guidance; this list either meets, exceeds or expands on that guidance.

More information about the Houston Work Safe Company program may be found at houston.org/worksafe.

1. Allow all but essential on-site employees to work from home.

While companies may maintain on-site workers to complete specific business tasks, employers should continue to allow all but those necessary employees to work remotely.

2. Create a safe work environment for all on-site employees.

- a. Create physical separation. Health officials advise that all individuals should remain at least six feet apart to avoid possible transmission. Employers should establish protocols that allow all on-site employees to maintain a distance of at least six feet while working.
- b. Close communal spaces. Where possible, employers should discontinue use of any communal spaces such as lunchrooms, breakrooms, meeting rooms and other gathering spaces to avoid unnecessary person-to-person exposure.
- c. Expand cleaning operations. Companies where workers must remain onsite should increase cleaning protocols of all high-touch and high-traffic areas throughout the day.

3. Require workers with COVID-19 or flu-like symptoms to stay home.

To minimize exposure to other personnel, all workers who are experiencing even mild symptoms (principally fever, dry cough, sneezing) should avoid entering the workplace, report the situation to their supervisor and remain home.

- a. Companies should consider adjusting paid sick leave (PTO) policies. Employers should remove disincentives from people self-reporting illnesses. It is to a company’s advantage for sick employees to stay home.

4. Encourage proper hygiene.

Employers should provide sufficient hand sanitizing stations, guidelines for proper hand washing and soap at all hand-washing stations to ensure proper hygiene at the workplace.

5. Apply industry best practices to reopening and expanding operations.

National, state and local trade associations, along with leading companies in most business sectors, have developed robust sector-specific best practices to successfully and safely operate in this environment and have shared these resources online.

WORK SAFE GUIDELINES**6. Employ virtual meeting technology.**

To avoid unnecessary exposure, employers should implement online video conferencing and other virtual meeting and messaging tools to conduct meetings. No one should feel the need to meet in person, even if they are in the same physical office.

7. Create alternate teams.

Employers with on-site staff should create alternating teams (i.e. morning/afternoon shifts, day/evening, every other day) where possible so that operations may continue if one team becomes exposed and is required to quarantine.

8. Restrict on-site access.

Employee guests and other visitors should only be allowed access to any office or worksite when absolutely needed. For customer-oriented businesses, customers should be allowed access only provided they follow the safety protocols established by the business.

9. Limit non-essential work-related travel

Employers are strongly encouraged to follow the direction of public health officials to guide travel decisions outside of the Houston region. If travel is essential, employees should protect themselves and others during the duration of the trip, including following CDC travel guidelines. Travelers from high-risk areas should consult with their medical provider regarding self-quarantining and self-monitoring measures.

10. Eliminate crowding.

Limit the number of customers or individuals allowed in the business or workplace at one time to allow for social distancing. If possible, utilize markings to ensure safe spacing at all times.

11. Decrease physical contact.

Establish measures to limit interaction between employees and other employees and employees and customers. Utilize contactless solutions.

12. Require employees and customers to wear personal protective equipment when possible.

Face coverings should be worn by employees and customers, especially if it is difficult or impossible to maintain a 6-foot distance. Proper training on wearing and disposing of PPE should be provided to all employees and the workplace should provide protective equipment for all employees unable to provide their own.

13. Develop health checks.

Create a plan to train employees in responsible health checks using proper techniques and protocols. Utilize temperature checks to monitor the health of employees and send home employees who display symptoms. Employees who have a fever or display symptoms of COVID-19 or flu-like illness should not be allowed to work.

14. Deploy contact tracing protocols.

Conduct workplace contact tracing in the event an employee tests positive and has been present at the worksite. Employers should consider the employee's privacy and should only share information related to the fact others may have had direct contact with a positive case of COVID-19. These employees should be encouraged to self-quarantine. Consider utilizing technologies that facilitate workplace contact tracing.

15. Establish anonymous reporting.

To maintain a safe work environment for on-site employees, companies should create an anonymous complaint channel for employees to report unsafe practices or violations of protocol during this period.

BEST PRACTICES

for All Employers

Develop and Implement Policies

Employers should develop and implement appropriate policies, in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations and guidelines, and informed by industry best practices, regarding:

- Social distancing and protective equipment
- Temperature checks
- Testing, isolating, and contact tracing
- Sanitation
- Use and disinfection of common and high-traffic areas
- Business travel

SOCIAL DISTANCING AND PPE

- Adopt social distancing standards in all areas of the place of business or workplace, especially in high traffic areas, or areas where employees tend to gather. Limit the number of people allowed in the business or workplace at one time to allow for social distancing. If possible, utilize markings to ensure safe spacing at all times, close areas where people would gather, and rearrange space to provide physical distance.
- Establish measures to limit interaction between employees and between employees and customers. Utilize contactless solutions. Handshaking should be avoided.
- Require employees to wear PPE when possible. Face coverings should be worn by employees and customers, especially if it is difficult or impossible to maintain a 6-foot distance. Proper training on wearing and disposing of PPE should be provided to all employees.
- Provide protective equipment for employees unable to acquire their own.
- Establish how compliance will be monitored and corrected if deficient.

TEMPERATURE CHECKS

- Utilize temperature checks, monitor the health of employees and send home employees who display symptoms. Employees who have a fever or display symptoms of COVID-19 or flu-like illness will not be allowed to work.
- Create a plan and train employees responsible for checks on proper techniques and relevant protocols.

TESTING, ISOLATING, AND CONTACT TRACING

- Provide information on testing to employees and encourage testing prior to returning to work, if possible.

- If an employee tests positive, provide protocols to allow employee to self-quarantine at home, and if needed, allow for other employees who had direct contact with the individual to self-quarantine at home even if not displaying symptoms for 14-days.

SANITATION/USE AND DISINFECTION OF COMMON AND HIGH-TRAFFIC AREAS

- Increase the frequency of disinfection, sanitation, and cleaning measures and require additional sanitizing measures for certain areas and for certain circumstances (i.e. high traffic areas; high contact areas).
- Provide employees a place to wash hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol and provide the supplies needed.
- Keep a logbook for the cleaning regimen of high traffic areas and train employees responsible for cleaning on proper sanitation and disinfection measures.
- Train employees in proper personal hygiene and disinfection practices.
- Provide easy and regular access to disinfectant, hand sanitizers, and cleaning products for employees' workspaces and personal hygiene.

BUSINESS TRAVEL

- Define essential vs. non-essential travel for employees and clearly communicate when essential travel is necessitated.
- If an employee must engage in essential travel, employers should have a plan to allow for the employee to self-isolate at home for 14 days upon return.
- Require employees to wear PPE and utilize personal hygiene precautions while traveling.

BEST PRACTICES FOR ALL EMPLOYERS

Monitor Workplace

Monitor workforce for indicative symptoms, and do not allow symptomatic people to physically return to work until cleared by a medical provider.

Key Considerations

- Regularly monitor employees for symptoms of COVID-19 or flu-like symptoms and send home any employee displaying symptoms.
- Provide training for employees charged with monitoring symptoms and temperature checks and be clear on relevant protocols.
- If an employee is displaying symptoms, especially fever, the employee should be separated from other employees and customers immediately and sent home; and any area visited by the sick employee must be cleaned and disinfected.
- Employees who have close contact with someone testing positive for COVID-19 or with a presumed case should be encouraged to stay home and self-isolate for 14 days.
- Establish protocols regarding sick leave, leave of absence, or other work accommodations for employees who are forced to quarantine for 14 days due.
- Consider non-punitive leave policies so employees do not feel pressured to come to work if they are sick.

Workplace Contact Tracing

Develop and implement policies and procedures for workforce contact tracing following employee COVID+ test.

Key Considerations

- Conduct workplace contact tracing in the event an employee tests positive and has been present at the worksite. Employers should consider the employee's privacy and should only share information related to the fact others may have had direct contact with a positive case of COVID-19.
- If an employee tests positive for COVID-19 or presents as a presumptive positive case, other employees who had direct contact with individual should be informed and asked to self-isolate for 14 days from the day of the contact. Leave of absence or quarantine protocols should be provided for employees who may be forced to self-isolate due to contact with a positive case in the workplace.
- Encourage employees to share if they have been in close contact with someone who tests positive or has symptoms of COVID-19 or flu-like symptoms and encourage the employee to stay home and self-isolate for 14 days from the day of contact.

ALL EMPLOYERS GUIDANCE

Encourage Telework and Return to Work in Phases

Continue to encourage telework whenever possible and feasible with business operations.

Key Considerations

- Require those employees who can fulfill their job duties remotely to continue teleworking from home and discourage those employees from coming into the office.
- Maintain policies consistent with the recommendation that the general public leaves home infrequently and practices strict social distancing in public.
- For employees who continue to be physically present in the business or work site and for those who must return to the workplace, limit the numbers of workers on site at one time by implementing return to work in phases or shifts.
- Discourage in-person meetings of employees and provide solutions to allow for remote meetings to occur.
- Use online conferencing, email, or telephone in place of in-person meetings, even when people are in the same building.
- Ensure employees maximize social distancing when in public and limit social settings to no more than 10 people, where appropriate distancing may be practical.
- Encourage use of digital files and limit use of paper documents or other items having to be passed between employees.

Common Areas

Close common areas where personnel are likely to congregate/interact or enforce strict social distancing protocols.

Key Considerations

- Close all common areas when possible (i.e. breakrooms, lunchrooms, lobbies where employees or customers would gather).
- If it is not possible to close the area, enforce strict social distancing, provide markings, and arrange the setting to allow for physical distance. If the business has a waiting room, discourage use by having customers wait in their cars or taking them back to rooms immediately upon arrival.
- Implement protocols for strict social distancing to occur while using elevators (i.e. limit number of passengers, require face coverings, encourage utilization of alternatives, implement temperature checks prior to usage).
- Provide contactless solutions for employees work whenever possible.
- If common areas must remain open, discourage employees from gathering in the areas (i.e. remove shared coffee machine, remove chairs and tables) and increase disinfection and sanitation measures for all surfaces. Provide employees with the ability to wash their hands or utilize hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol and provide employees with the products.
- If employees are not able to wear PPE at all times, at minimum, require use of face masking/covering in high traffic and common areas.

Travel

Minimize non-essential travel and adhere to CDC guidelines regarding isolation following travel.

Key Considerations

- Limit or restrict non-essential travel. For those who engage in essential travel outside of the region, require employee to self-isolate at home for 14-days.
- Require use of PPE for employees who must engage in essential travel (i.e. face masking).
- Adhere to increased personal hygiene measures (i.e. handwashing and use of hand sanitizer)

Accommodations for Vulnerable Personnel

Strongly consider special accommodations for personnel who are members of a vulnerable population.

Key Considerations

- Allow for special accommodations for vulnerable personnel who must be present in the workplace (i.e. isolated working environment, increased disinfection and sanitation).
- Encourage employee to report any concerns about their health and safety to the employer.

INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC BEST PRACTICES RESOURCE GUIDE

While there is general guidance that applies across all or most sectors, each industry and business is different. National, states and regional trade associations have created well-thought industry-specific guidance. The Greater Houston Partnership presents this curated list of resources that we have found to be most helpful.

Note: This list is not exhaustive and the Partnership does not control the content of these third-party resources.

GENERAL GUIDANCE

[Johns Hopkins: Public Health Principles for a Phased Reopening](#)

[OSHA: Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)

[CDC: Guidance for Workplaces](#)

[CDC: Guidance for Critical Workers](#)

HIGH-TOUCH SECTORS

[National Restaurant Association: Reopen Guidance](#)

[National Retail Federation: Operation Open Door Checklist](#)

[National Retail Federation: A Blueprint for Operating Safe](#)

[Target: SAFE Retail: Considerations for Retail Operations Post COVID-19](#)

[Kroger: What We've Learned](#)

[Professional Beauty Association: Back to Work Guidelines](#)

INDUSTRIAL SECTOR

[American Petroleum Institute: COVID-19 Mitigations for Offshore Energy Operations](#)

[American Gas Association: Industry Resource Page](#)

[Association of General Contractors: Coronavirus Resource Page](#)

[American Petroleum Institute: Pandemic](#)

Resources & Information

[Texas Construction Association: COVID-19 Guidance](#)

[National Association of Manufacturers: American Renewal Action Plan](#)

OFFICE/KNOWLEDGE SECTORS

[Building Owners & Managers Association: Preparing Building for Re-Entry Amid COVID-19](#)

[CBRE: Reopening the World's Workplaces](#)

[Transwestern: The Workbook for Back to the Workplace Readiness](#)

[Technology Services Industry Association: The Pandemic Playbook for Technology Solution Providers](#)

HEALTHCARE SECTOR

[American Nurses Association: COVID-19 Resource Center](#)

[American Medical Association: Guide for Private Practices](#)

[American Dental Association: Reopen Toolkit](#)

[American Hospital Association: Resources to Address COVID-19](#)

[Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Recommendations for Re-Opening Facilities to Provide Non-emergent, Non-COVID-19 Healthcare](#)

LOGISTICS/ TRANSPORTATION SECTOR

[Association of American Railroads: COVID-19 Facts & Guidance](#)

[Technology Maintenance Council: Cleaning Best Practices](#)

SMALL BUSINESS SECTOR

[U.S. Chamber of Commerce: Small Business Toolkit](#)

[National Federation of Independent Businesses: Small Business Resources in Response to Coronavirus](#)

EDUCATION SECTOR

[Texas Education Agency: COVID-19 Support and Guidance](#)

[CDC: Guidance for Schools and Childcare Programs](#)

SOCIAL SERVICES SECTOR

[Microsoft: Guide for Nonprofits](#)

[CDC: Guidelines for Childcare Centers](#)

[National Association of Social Workers: Social Worker Safety](#)