

Universal Guidelines for All New Hampshire Employers and Employees

These Universal Guidelines apply to all businesses, organizations, and individual business operators for the operation of their business. These Universal Guidelines must be complied with in conjunction with any applicable industry-specific guidelines issued by the State of New Hampshire. Industry-specific guidance can be found at <https://www.covidguidance.nh.gov/>.

The combination of these Universal Guidelines and any applicable industry-specific guidance comprises the current operating guidelines for each business, organization, or individual business operators. Nothing in this document or other guidance precludes any business, organization, or individual business operator from taking additional precautions for the health and safety of its employees and consumers.

In addition to these Universal Guidelines, businesses, organizations, individual business operators, volunteers, and employees must also review, monitor, and follow other applicable guidance issued by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and any applicable federal or state regulatory requirements to reduce transmission among employees, volunteers, and consumers in order to maintain healthy business and organization operations, including the following:

- CDC [guidance for businesses and employers](#);
- CDC [employer information for office buildings](#);
- CDC [guidance for cleaning and disinfection](#);
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) [guidance on preparing workplaces for COVID-19](#);
- OSHA guidance on wearing cloth face coverings/masks;
- NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) [guidance on employee travel and screening](#); and
- NH DHHS [guidance on the use of cloth face coverings/masks](#).

As part of these Universal Guidelines, businesses, organizations, and individual business operators should review the [CDC Print Resources website](#) for sample communications that they should use and post in their facilities and on their websites.

Employers and organizations MUST comply with the following:

- 1. Prohibit all employees or volunteers with symptoms of COVID-19 or those who report exposure risk factors from entering the workplace:**
 - a. Employers and organizations must require all employees or volunteers who have symptoms of COVID-19, who report close contact (within 6 feet) with a person known or suspected to have COVID-19, or who report travel-related risk factors (see the screening questions below) to stay home. If employees or volunteers have COVID-19 symptoms (see the screening questions below) prior to coming to work or activities, employees or volunteers must notify



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their supervisors by phone or electronically and not report to work or activities.

- b. If employees or volunteers develop symptoms of COVID-19 (see the screening questions below) while at work, the employee or volunteer must notify his or her supervisor and be sent home immediately. Surfaces in that employee's or volunteer's workspace or activity area must be cleaned and disinfected.
 - c. All symptomatic employees or volunteers must be instructed to contact their healthcare providers to be tested for COVID-19 and self-isolate at home.
 - d. Employees or volunteers who report close contact with someone known to have COVID-19, symptomatic or asymptomatic, must be instructed to contact their healthcare providers to be tested for COVID-19 and self-quarantine at home. (**Note:** Testing for COVID-19 in a person with a known exposure but who is without symptoms does not remove the need to self-quarantine. However, testing is important for early identification of infection to inform public health contact tracing and control efforts).
 - e. Employees or volunteers who report travel-related risk factors (see the screening questions below) must self-quarantine at home, but do not need COVID-19 testing unless they develop symptoms.
 - f. Employees or volunteers who do not have primary care providers or health insurance can request COVID-19 testing through [one of the many local COVID-19 testing options](#).
- 2. Prohibit all employees or volunteers diagnosed with COVID-19 or those with an identified close contact exposure to someone confirmed with COVID-19 from the workplace or activity areas:**
- a. Employers and organizations shall require employees or volunteers diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19 to stay home.
 - b. Under limited circumstance, an essential employee, who is exposed to another person with COVID-19 but who is asymptomatic and is found to not be infected with COVID-19, may be allowed to return to the workplace or activity area under special restrictions. Such exceptions shall only be made with specific approval from NH DHHS Public Health officials and the business or organization and the employee shall abide by the additional protective public health restrictions.
- 3. Develop a process for screening all employees and volunteers reporting for work or activities for COVID-19 related symptoms or risk factors as follows:**
- a. Develop an online process or identify a location to screen each employee or volunteer each day before he or she enters the workplace or activity area. Such processes must be clearly communicated to employees or volunteers. Face coverings/masks must be worn by both people during an in-person screening process. See "Face Coverings" below.
 - b. Each employee or volunteer must answer the following screening questions:



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- i. Do you have any of the following symptoms of COVID-19:
 1. Fever (a documented temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher) or are feeling feverish;
 2. Respiratory symptoms such as a runny nose, nasal congestion, sore throat, cough, or shortness of breath;
 3. Respiratory symptoms such as a runny nose, nasal congestion, sore throat, cough, or shortness of breath;
 4. General body symptoms such as muscle aches, chills, and severe fatigue;
 5. Gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea; or
 6. Changes in your sense of taste or smell?
 7. Have you been in close contact with someone who is suspected or confirmed to have had COVID-19 in the past 14 days? (Note: healthcare workers caring for COVID-19 patients while wearing appropriate personal protective equipment are not considered to have a close contact exposure and should answer “No” to this question).
 - a. Have you traveled in the past 14 days either:
 - i. Internationally (outside the U.S.);
 - ii. By cruise ship;
 - iii. Domestically (within the U.S.) outside of NH, VT, RI, CT, MA. Or ME (regardless of his/her mode of transportation);
- c. Take the temperatures of all employees and volunteers daily before they begin their workday or activity:
 - i. Employers and organizations should take the temperatures of their employees or volunteers on-site with a non-touch thermometer each day upon each person’s arrival at work or an activity.
 - ii. If this is not possible, each employee or volunteer can take his/her temperature before arriving at work or activity as long as the temperature is sufficiently authenticated by the employee or volunteer. Temperature should be lower than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit.
- d. Employees or volunteers with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 symptoms (even if only mild symptoms), those who report close contact with someone suspected or confirmed with COVID-19, or those reporting travel risk factors must not be allowed into the facility:
 - Symptomatic persons should be instructed to contact their health care provider to be tested for COVID-19 and self-isolate at home following the instructions below.
 - Asymptomatic persons reporting close contact with someone suspected or confirmed with COVID-19, or who report one of the



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- travel-related risk factors should self-quarantine for 14 days from their last exposure or return from travel.
- e. Healthcare workers should follow healthcare worker-specific guidance.
 - f. Employees or volunteers with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 symptoms must isolate at home until symptom-based criteria are met for discontinuation of isolation:
 - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first started,
AND
 - At least 24 hours have passed since last fever (off any fever-reducing medications),
AND
 - Symptoms have improved
 - g. Per the Equal Employment Opportunity Commissioner (EEOC), the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), other federal and state pertinent guidelines and guidance, and state and federal laws, employers are required to maintain the confidentiality of employee health information. Prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace by not making any determinations of health risk or health status based on age, race, gender, disability, or country of origin.
4. **Enhanced cleaning and disinfection** policies and procedures must be developed, and employees and volunteers must be educated and trained about proper cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces. Cleaning and disinfection is intended to protect employees and customers/clients from the possibility of fomite transmission of COVID-19 (transmission from surfaces recently contaminated with the coronavirus).
- a. Cleaning and disinfection should follow CDC [guidance for cleaning and disinfecting your facility](#). Cleaning reduces the number of germs, dirt and impurities on a surface. Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces.
 - b. Employers should provide training to all employees about cleaning and disinfection prior to assigning cleaning tasks, and employers should consider creating a checklist to guide cleaning and disinfection procedures.
 - c. Use disposable gloves to clean and disinfect.
 - d. Cleaning and disinfecting supplies must be made readily available by the business
 - e. Use an [EPA-approved disinfectant](#) effective against the novel coronavirus.
 - f. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least every two hours.
 - g. Shared tools or equipment must be cleaned and disinfected between use by employees and/or customers/clients.
 - h. Maintain other routine facility cleaning and disinfection procedures.
5. **Work processes** should be modified to reduce the risk to employees, volunteers and customers; all work processes must be reviewed for possible modifications. Consider implementing the following, when possible:



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- a. Modifying employee and volunteer schedules to reduce the frequency and duration of physical interactions, including staggering shifts, breaks, and meals (maintain compliance with wage and hour laws and other requirements).
 - b. Conduct meetings by phone or computer conferencing applications and limit in-person meetings.
 - c. Arrange employee and volunteer work-space layout to allow for 6 feet of social distancing.
 - d. Stagger any customer/client appointments to prevent customer interaction.
 - e. Space customer/client appointments to allow sufficient time for any needed cleaning and disinfection between customers/clients.
 - f. Small waiting areas should be closed to avoid congregating; larger waiting rooms should have seating for clients spaced more than 6 feet apart, and customers/clients should be instructed to wear a cloth face covering while in the waiting room.
 - g. Avoid waiting lines; any lines should have clearly demarcated spacing for people to stand/wait 6 feet or more apart.
 - h. Develop check-in and check-out processes that involve electronic or other non-touch options, including with financial transactions.
 - i. Businesses should provide physical barriers to protect customers/clients and employees such as partitions or plastic barriers.
6. **Allow employees or volunteers to work from home as much as practical:** Remote work policies assist in limiting exposure and maintaining social distancing. This is encouraged as much as possible while still allowing a business to open.
7. Businesses and organizations should also take steps to limit self-servicer options. For example, consumer samples, communal packaging, food/beverages (e.g. candy dishes, common creamers at coffee stations).
8. **Reduce virus spread between people** by promoting good etiquette for coughing and sneezing, and frequent hand hygiene. Provide employees, volunteers, and customers with access to tissues, trash cans, soap and water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol:
- a. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer must be made readily available to employees, volunteers, and customers/clients at entrances and exits to the facility, within customer/client service areas, throughout the facility in employee work areas and break rooms, and in other areas frequently visited by both employees and customers/clients. Consider providing individual bottles of hand sanitizer to each employee.
 - b. Frequent hand hygiene should be actively promoted for employees, volunteers, and customers, including upon entry to a facility, when leaving, before/after touch a person's face or face covering, before and after eating, and throughout the day.



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- c. Discourage employees and volunteers from using other workers' tools and equipment. If not possible, establish procedures for cleaning and disinfecting equipment between use.
9. **Restrooms** should be monitored to ensure social distancing and that routine cleaning and disinfection is conducted:
 - a. If needed, limit the number of people who occupy a restroom to allow for physical distancing and avoid close contact between employees, volunteers, and customers.
 - b. Avoid crowds or lines forming inside or outside restrooms.
 - c. Ensure toilets and sinks are functional and that paper towel dispensers and hand soap is regularly filled.
 - d. Consider use of non-touch flush toilets, soap dispensers, water faucets, paper towel dispensers, and trash cans.
 - e. Clean and disinfect bathroom surfaces frequently, including toilets, faucets, countertops, stall doors, handles, diaper changing tables, etc.
 - f. **Identify a safety officer** who is a dedicated staff member tasked with monitoring and improving compliance with social distancing, face covering use, hand hygiene, and other protective policies. This person should also serve as a point of contact for responding to employee, volunteer, and/or customer COVID-19 concerns.
 - g. **Building ventilation** should be evaluated to increase room and overall building ventilation, including increasing the number of air exchanges, increase outdoor air ventilation, limit internal air circulation, and improve central air filtration. Ventilation systems' filters must be routinely replaced and other necessary maintenance should be performed as needed. CDC guidance should be reviewed and used in evaluating building ventilation.
10. **Plan for potential COVID-19 cases:** Implement plans to continue your essential business functions in case you experience higher than usual absenteeism. Businesses and organizations should work with state and local official when needed to monitor and investigate cases of COVID-19. In all cases, businesses and organizations must work in a manner to ensure privacy rights.
11. **Covered businesses and organizations and employees should be reminded of the provision of the federal [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#):** This law allows for paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons, such as for self-quarantining or seeking a medical diagnosis for COVID-19 symptoms.
12. **Update the Employee/Volunteer Illness Policy:** Businesses and organizations must review their policies to make sure that policies and practices are consistent with public health recommendations and are consistent with existing state and federal workplace laws. Businesses and organizations should amend or update



their internal policies to include symptoms of COVID-19 or create a COVID-19 specific policy. Businesses and organizations should maintain flexible, non-punitive policies that permit employees to stay home if ill or to care for a sick family member. These policies should incorporate any sector specific recommendations by the state of New Hampshire. All staff and volunteers should sign the policy, and the policy should be posted for confirmation.

13. Consider work options for vulnerable employees:

- a. Employees who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the CDC, either based on age or underlying health conditions should be encouraged to consider their individual risk factors and whether they are safer to work from home.
- b. Employees should be encouraged to have these discussions with their employers to explore any options available.
- c. Employers must prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace by not making any determinations of health risk or health status based on age, race, gender, disability, or country of origin.

14. Communicate frequently with employees, volunteers, and consumers about steps being taken to prevent spread of COVID-19 in the workplace:

Businesses and organizations should communicate expectations to employees and volunteers with recommendations on steps everybody can take to prevent spread of COVID-19. Post extensive signage on health policies, including the following documents in the workplace and activity areas to help educate building occupants on COVID-10 best practices. Communicate with consumers about steps being taken to protect them from COVID-19 exposure in the workplace and activity areas. Post extensive signage informing customers about the symptoms of COVID-19, that they should remain home if experiencing any symptoms or if they have come into close contact with someone suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, and actions customers should take to protect themselves and other facility occupants from COVID-19 exposure (e.g., physical distancing, cloth face covering use, hand hygiene, etc.).

Employees and volunteers MUST comply with the following guidelines:

- 1. Stay Home when feeling ill:** Employees or volunteers who have symptoms (see list of symptoms above) must notify their supervisor and stay home. When exposed to COVID-19 or if diagnosed with COVID-19, employees and volunteers must stay home.

Employees and volunteers who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the CDC, either due to age or underlying health conditions, are



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encouraged to consider their individual risk and whether they are safer to work or participate from home.

2. Employees and volunteers who develop symptoms of COVID-10, even mild symptoms, should consult their primary care providers about COVID-19 testing, or seek testing through one of the public testing options, listed [here](#).
3. **Increase hygiene practices, including:**
 - a. Wash hands and use hand sanitizer frequently
 - b. Avoid touching the face, eyes or mouth
 - c. Practice good respiratory etiquette. This includes coughing and sneezing into a tissue or your elbow rather than your hands.
4. **Wear a face covering:** While at work, an activity area, and in public, employees and volunteers should wear face coverings to help protect against the spread of the virus. Employees and volunteers should review the CDC's guidance on use of face coverings. Medical-grade masks should be reserved for healthcare workers or first responders.
 - a. Employees and volunteers who are directly providing service to consumers or individuals must wear masks while providing such service. "Providing service" examples include explaining information to consumers or individuals in person, interacting with consumers by showing or providing products/services in person, registering individuals in person, or any other interaction where maintaining social distancing is difficult.
 - b. Under these Guidelines or any industry-specific guidance, when a face covering/mask is required, wearing only a face shield is prohibited as a substitute for a face covering/mask. Face shields alone are not acceptable substitutes for face coverings/masks. Face shields can be worn with face coverings/masks for additional protection.
 - c. Under these Guidelines or any industry-specific guidance, when a face covering/mask is required, a Plexiglas or plastic barrier shall not be substituted for a face covering/mask. A Plexiglas or plastic barrier alone is not an acceptable substitute for a face covering/mask. Plexiglas or plastic barriers can be used in addition to face coverings/masks but cannot be used alone.
5. **Practice social distancing:** To the greatest extent possible, all employees and volunteers should maintain safe social distancing, which means keeping a distance of at least 6 or more feet between on another at all times.



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- 6. Abide by business, organization, local and state guidelines:** Employees and volunteers should follow all guidelines issued by their employers, organizations, local or state officials. This may include the use of gloves, social distancing practices and increase sanitation and disinfection practices.

As previously noted, these guidelines are to be followed in addition to the industry-specific guidance. Industry-specific guidance has been created with the input of private sector working groups in partnership with the Governor's Economic Re-Opening Task Force. Guidance is subject to change and may be released on a rolling basis. New Hampshire companies doing business in the state must follow these Universal Guidelines and other best practices set forth in this document.

To learn more, please visit the New Hampshire COVID-19 website for the latest COVID-19 information, resources and guidance: <https://www.nh.gov/covid19/>.

