

**Town of Concord, MA**  
**APP #64**  
**COVID-19 Workplace Safety Practices and Procedures**

**I. Introduction**

This policy represents the workplace practices and procedures the Town has put in place to protect the health and safety of employees during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The requirements set forth in this policy apply to all Town employees. Individual departments and divisions shall adopt additional procedures specific to their own operations as required to meet sector-specific safety guidelines.

The health and safety of Town employees and the public we serve are of utmost importance to the Town. The Town also recognizes that municipal services are critical to the well-being of Concord's residents and, therefore, the Town will strive to resume normal operations where possible while protecting the safety of employees.

This policy will remain in effect as long as COVID-19 threatens public health and safety.

**II. COVID-19 Identification & Response**

***COVID-19 Symptoms***

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a virus that can spread from person to person. Symptoms, which range from mild to severe and appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus, can include:

- Fever (100.4° F [37.8° C] or greater using an oral thermometer)
- Cough, runny nose or sore throat
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Muscle aches or chills
- New loss of taste or smell
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Trouble breathing\*
- Persistent pain or pressure in chest\*
- Inability to wake or stay awake\*
- Bluish lips or face\*
- New confusion\*

Note that this list does not include all possible symptoms. Employees should consult their health care provider about any concerning symptoms. Symptoms marked with an asterisk (\*) above are emergency symptoms requiring **immediate** medical care. Sick employees are encouraged to, refer to the CDC document "Prevent the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick," which is available on the Human Resources Department's website.

***Employees with COVID-19 Symptoms, Positive Test, or Possible Exposure***

To aid in the identification of and response to COVID-19, employees are required to:

- remain aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases,
- perform a self-evaluation of symptoms and possible exposures (see Appendix A) before reporting to the worksite each day,
- **not report to work when experiencing symptoms, during periods when they may be contagious, or when subject to mandatory quarantine or isolation,**
- **leave work promptly if they become ill at work,**

- notify their department head as soon as possible if they experience symptoms of COVID-19, and
- notify their department head as soon as possible if a household member or other person with whom the employee has had close contact develops COVID-19 symptoms or is diagnosed with COVID-19.

Before an employee may return to work after reporting COVID-19 symptoms or diagnosis of themselves or a close contact, the employee's department head (or designee) must coordinate with the Public Health Director (or designee) to ensure that applicable federal, state, and/or local government requirements or protocols are adhered to.

The Town reserves the right to send individuals home who are exhibiting any signs of sickness.

#### ***Exposure-Response/Communication Plan***

If an employee reports COVID-19 symptoms or diagnosis of themselves or someone with whom they have had close contact, and the employee has been in the workplace within 72 hours of the symptoms, diagnosis or exposure, the employee's department head (or designee) must take the following steps immediately:

1. If the employee is at work, take steps to isolate the employee.
2. Notify the Town's Public Health Division (see contact info in Section XI) to report and receive instructions for containment, contact tracing, temporary closure of office spaces, and other required steps.
3. Notify Human Resources via the reporting form issued to department heads.
4. Notify Facilities to initiate any cleaning/disinfecting that may be needed.
5. Follow advice of the Public Health Director (or designee) before allowing employee to return to work.

When deemed appropriate by the Public Health Division and/or Town Manager, the Town will notify employees and visitors of potential exposure so they may take proper precautions. The identity of the individual with COVID-19 symptoms or diagnosis will not be disclosed to others, unless such individual authorizes disclosure of his/her name to assist in assessing possible exposure.

Employees with concerns about a co-worker's symptoms, possible exposures, hygiene practices, or other matters should address those concerns to their department head or Human Resources rather than confronting, shunning, or lecturing another individual.

### **III. Limited Access to Town Buildings**

To reduce contacts and the impact of any exposures in the workplace, the Town has adopted the following protocols related to access to our facilities.

#### ***Employee Access to Buildings***

- Department heads and division managers shall remain aware of the Commonwealth's occupancy recommendations and shall assign work schedules and advise employees on rules related to building entry accordingly.
- Employees may only enter the workplace during times when assigned to work, or when entrance to the workplace has been authorized by a supervisor in consideration of occupancy limits. All entries must be logged for contact tracing.

- Employees shall limit their movement within facilities to reduce contact with coworkers and may only enter assigned/authorized areas. Signs are posted in work areas where employees and others may not enter without authorization and occupancy is limited.

#### ***Adjusted Work Schedules & Telework***

- Department heads will adjust work hours, assignments, and locations as needed to minimize contact across workers and reduce congestion at entry points.
- Employees will be assigned telework when the department head determines such work is feasible; if an employee assigned to the workplace wishes to request telework, they are encouraged to discuss this with the department head to explore options.
- Employees must coordinate with supervisors and coworkers to stagger work schedules and breaks in order to limit how many people are in one place at the same time.

#### ***Non-Employee Access to Buildings***

- No department shall allow general public entry to a building without advance approval of the Town Manager and not before all applicable workplace safety standards have been met.
- The public or non-staff (“visitors”) shall not be allowed to enter facilities without an appointment or business need as authorized by the department head. Before allowing visitor entry, the department head shall ensure visitor protocols are available via entryway postings and the internet.
- Visitors should sanitize hands upon entry into a Town facility.
- Visitors are required to wear a face covering/mask while on the Town’s premises; disposable masks will be made available when possible.
- If a visitor is not able to wear a mask, staff will seek alternatives to providing services without entry to the facility, such as a remote transaction or delivery of materials outside of the building.
- Visitor access should be limited to specific areas such as reception counters and designated conference rooms. Public access to restrooms must be limited as appropriate to the design and use of the building.
- Visitor’s time on the premises shall be limited to the shortest time possible; less than 10 minutes is ideal.
- Visitors spending 10 or more minutes in a building should be asked to contact the Town immediately should they develop COVID-19 symptoms within 48 hours of being on the Town’s premises.

#### ***Contact Tracing Log***

Each facility must maintain a log of everyone who comes in contact with the site to enable contact tracing. Accordingly:

- Department heads shall ensure that each worksite has procedures for logging who has been on the premises each day where required by the Commonwealth’s guidelines. Entry of both employees and visitors (e.g., vendors, delivery persons, and the general public) must be tracked.
- No employee may allow someone to come in contact with the site without logging the contact in accordance with established procedures.

#### **IV. Social Distancing at Work**

The Town has taken steps to ensure separation of 6 feet or more between individuals where possible, including installation of plexiglass shields, marking 6 foot distances on floors, rearranging workspaces, marking traffic flow directions, and posting limited-entry areas. All employees are expected to note and adhere to these physical guides. Furthermore, employees shall ensure social distancing as outlined below.

### **General Guidelines**

- Maintain a distance of 6 feet between yourself and others.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, even inside your home.
- Avoid gathering in groups.
- Improve ventilation and reduce contact by leaving interior doors of rest rooms, break rooms, meeting rooms, offices, and other spaces open and frequently opening exterior doors and windows (except when doing so will interfere with HVAC systems, security, safety or privacy, or is otherwise not feasible).

### **Meetings & Conversations**

- Meetings and conversations shall be conducted via video conference and phone when practicable.
- The number of attendees permitted at in-person meetings shall be limited by guidance of the Commonwealth.
- Employees may only attend off-site, in-person meetings when deemed necessary by the department head (individual meetings do not need approval if the department head has authorized a function to occur in person).
- In-person meetings/interactions may only take place when one of the following precautions is in place:
  - at least 6 feet of distance between participants can be maintained, or
  - an appropriate physical barrier (e.g., plexiglass) exists between individuals, or
  - all participants wear a face covering.
- The length of any in-person meeting/interaction shall be limited to the shortest time possible; less than 10 minutes is ideal.
- Meeting rooms must have sanitizer and cleaning supplies available, and meeting room tables, chair arms, and equipment must be sanitized by participants at the end of the meeting.

### **Break Rooms**

- Employees must wash or sanitize hands before touching common surfaces such as appliance or cabinet handles and buttons.
- Doors and windows should be kept open whenever possible to allow for ventilation and limit touching of doorknobs (however, consistent with Town's principals of sustainability, air conditioning units should not be run when windows and exterior doors are open).
- When utilizing the room to prepare or obtain items, employees must wear face coverings and not linger.
- Employees are encouraged to limit the time spent in break rooms and to seek other areas for eating and resting; when possible, eat in areas that are not frequented by others.
- Each employee must sanitize tables, chair arms, television knobs/remotes or other materials after use.
- Physical distancing of at least 6 feet must be maintained between individuals who are not wearing face masks.
- Where possible, individuals who are eating should be in areas separated from individuals who are obtaining or preparing food.
- Employees must not use common towels.

### **Travel**

- Employees may not travel out-of-state or overnight for business purposes unless authorized by the Town Manager in advance. State and federal travel restrictions/guidelines must be adhered to when Town business is being conducted.

- Employees who travel for personal reasons shall remain aware of state and federal restrictions and guidelines.
- If an employee is under mandatory quarantine or isolation due to travel, he/she must remain out of the workplace and shall coordinate with his/her supervisor to determine if telework is available.
- If an employee travels such that precautions such as isolation are recommended, he/she shall be responsible for assessing the risk based on the location and contacts made during travel and not put coworkers at risk; the employee shall work with supervisor to identify telework or other work modifications if circumstances warrant.
- The Town reserves the right to prohibit entry to the worksite after travel based on CDC or local recommendations in place at the time of the travel.

#### V. **Hygiene Protocols**

The Town encourages all employees to remain aware of and responsible for hygiene protocols to limit transmission of viruses. In addition to avoiding touching their eyes, nose, and mouth, the Town has adopted the hygiene protocols outlined below.

##### ***Face Coverings (aka Masks)***

Employees are expected to:

- Have a cloth face covering, which covers the mouth and nose, with them at all times when in Town facilities and/or on duty.
- Wear face coverings in common areas such as hallways and restrooms, when passing other people's work areas, when a physical distance of 6 feet cannot be maintained, and where/when otherwise directed by the department.
- Use proper hygiene for handling and maintaining face coverings, which includes not touching their face or the front of the mask, removing the mask carefully from the sides so as not to contaminate the front, laundering or disposing of masks each day, and following any additional guidance provided by the CDC.

The Town will strive to provide at least one washable face covering to each employee whose duties require interaction with other individuals and physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Any employee who is unable to wear a face mask due to an underlying medical condition should contact Human Resources to explore options.

##### ***Handwashing/Sanitizing***

Handwashing facilities with soap and running water are available in all Town offices. Hand sanitizer has been placed in high touch and frequently used areas; staff designated by the department head shall coordinate with Facilities regarding replenishment. Employees are encouraged to:

- Use hand sanitizer when entering Town facilities and workspaces.
- Wash hands regularly during the workday, using proper technique, as outlined in the, "When and How to Wash Your Hands" document found on the Human Resources website.
- When soap and water is not readily available, use hand sanitizer.
- Wash or sanitize hands after handling materials (e.g., paper, mail, boxes, equipment, etc.) that have been handled by others within 72 hours, and avoid touching other items before doing so.

##### ***Cough/Sneeze Etiquette***

When an employee coughs or sneezes, they are advised to:

- Cover their mouth and nose with a tissue.
- Throw used tissues in the trash.
- If a tissue isn't available, cough or sneeze into their elbow (not hands).
- Wash hands immediately after coughing, sneezing or nose-blowing.

### ***Workspaces and Equipment***

Sanitizing supplies have been provided to, and must be maintained in, all office locations; staff designated by the department head shall coordinate with Facilities regarding replenishment. All employees are expected to participate in the regular sanitation of workspaces and equipment as follows:

- Employees are responsible for cleaning their own workspaces, desks and equipment.
- Work groups are responsible for sanitizing common workspaces and equipment as assigned by the department head; at a minimum, such cleaning shall be done at the end of each day, and additionally based on frequency of use by multiple people.
- Employees shall avoid or limit sharing office equipment and tools (e.g., fax machines, telephones, copiers, vehicles, tools).
- Before using common machines/equipment, employees must sanitize hands. After use, employees must wipe down touch points and then wash or sanitize hands.
- Commonly used phones must be cleaned before and after use.
- Desks, workspaces, and vehicles should be kept uncluttered to allow for deep-cleaning as needed. Department heads may require an employee to organize workspace as deemed necessary.

### ***Cleaning of Facilities & Individual Workspaces***

- The Facilities Division is responsible for ensuring that frequent cleaning and disinfection of all sites occurs at least daily and more frequently if feasible. Such cleaning shall include frequent disinfecting of heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, elevator buttons, staircases, vending machines, restrooms, and breakrooms).
- A log shall be maintained by Facilities staff to record the date and time of all cleaning activities, including the areas cleaned, and scope of cleaning accomplished.
- Work teams may participate in additional cleaning as needed based on use and as assigned.

### ***Mail and Deliveries***

- Each department must have protocols for accepting shipping and deliveries in a designated area that limits contact and complies with contact log requirements.
- Drop boxes shall be utilized whenever possible to limit entry to facilities.
- Use of interoffice mail shall be avoided whenever possible; electronic transmission of documents is encouraged where feasible.

## **VI. Individuals with Higher Risk**

Employees at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 should take extra precautions to avoid getting sick. Such employees are encouraged to speak with their department head or Human Resources to explore whether reasonable accommodation such as telework, alternate work assignments, modified workplace accommodations, or leave are needed and available. According to the CDC, those at high-risk include people who:

- are 65 years and older
- are immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications

- have underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, including:
  - chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
  - serious heart conditions
  - severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
  - diabetes
  - chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
  - liver disease

**VII. Leave & Compensation During COVID-Related Absences**

The Town will provide paid leave to employees who are eligible under the provisions of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Furthermore, the Town has adopted temporary provisions for leave, in some cases with pay, to assist employees impacted by COVID-19. Employees who have been or need to be absent due to COVID-19 should consult with Human Resources to determine what paid and/or job-protected leave is available.

**VIII. Notice & Training Requirements**

Each department head is responsible for ensuring that all new department staff members have received this policy, have been trained regarding required safety protocols, and have had an opportunity to ask questions before beginning on-site duties.

Employees are responsible for reviewing signs regarding hygiene and safety protocols that have been posted throughout workspaces.

A Compliance Attestation Poster has been signed and posted in each office so as to be visible to employees and visitors.

COVID-19 Control Plans are maintained in the Human Resources Department.

**IX. Questions Regarding Safety Protocols**

The Town has, and will continue to, review Federal, State and Local guidelines and adopt protocols accordingly to provide for the safety of our workforce. Any employee who has questions or concerns about workplace safety is encouraged to speak with their department head or Human Resources.

**X. Violation of Policy**

Any employee violating this policy will be subject to appropriate discipline, including possible termination of employment.

**XI. Resources and Contact Information**

A number of agencies promote the health and well-being of the public and employees through information and compliance programs. We encourage employees to be familiar with guidance issued by such agencies. Furthermore, employees and supervisors may need to contact local health officials for guidance when there is a known COVID case or exposure. Below is contact information for these important agencies:

**Massachusetts Department of Public Health**

Phone: (617) 624-6000

TTY/TDD (617) 624-6001

Fax: (617) 624-5206

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-public-health>

**Town of Concord Public Health Division**

Susan Rask, Public Health Director

Phone: 978-318-3275

Email: [HealthDepartment@concordma.gov](mailto:HealthDepartment@concordma.gov)

<https://concordma.gov/616/Health>

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

**World Health Organization (WHO)**

<https://www.who.int/>

**XII. Acknowledgement of Receipt of Policy**

Each employee is required to acknowledge receipt of this Administrative Policy & Procedure #64, "COVID-19 Workplace Safety Practices & Procedures," that it has been reviewed with them, and that they have read its contents.

**Appendix A:**  
**Self-Evaluation Questions for Employees**

**Employees are expected to keep their colleagues safe by monitoring their symptoms, temperature, and exposures. Before reporting to the worksite each day, the following must be considered:**

1. Have you been in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 or with symptoms?
2. Have you had a fever or felt feverish in the last 72 hours?
3. Are you experiencing any respiratory symptoms including a runny nose, sore throat, cough, or shortness of breath?
4. Are you experiencing any new muscle aches or chills?
5. Have you experienced any new change in your sense of taste or smell?
6. Have you travelled out of state within the last 72 hours?

**If you answered “yes” to any of the questions above, do not physically report to work until you have consulted with your supervisor and have been approved to enter the worksite.**