

COVID-19 Fact Sheet and FAQ for Businesses

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What types of businesses are required to close their physical location?

Governor Wolf has taken action to protect the public and businesses to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus. On March 19th at 8:00 pm, Governor Wolf issued an order to close all non-life sustaining businesses. The complete list of non-life sustaining can be found [here](#).

For more information about life sustaining businesses, please see the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development's [Life Sustaining Business Frequently Asked Questions](#).

How can life sustaining businesses protect the health of employees, customers, and visitors?

There are many steps that life sustaining businesses can take to protect the health of employees, customers, and visitors. For guidance on how to protect employee health, see the Department of Health's Guidance for Businesses. To prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace, use only guidance from DOH or CDC. Do not make determinations of risk based on an employee's race or country of origin and be sure to maintain confidentiality of people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

Businesses are encouraged to practice the following preventive measures:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover any coughs or sneezes with your elbow, do not use your hands!
- Clean surfaces frequently, such as countertops, light switches, cell phones and other frequently touched areas.
- Contain--if you are sick, stay home until you are feeling better.

When should an employee stay home?

- **Any employee who does not work at a [life-sustaining business](#), should stay home.**
- Employees who have [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) should notify their supervisor and [stay home](#).
- Employees who are COVID-19 positive should not return to work until the criteria to [discontinue home isolation](#) are met, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments. This criterion is outlined below.
 - **Persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue home isolation under the following conditions:**
 - At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications AND improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); AND,
 - At least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
 - For example, if day 0 is the onset of illness, persons with COVID-19 that are afebrile and have no respiratory symptoms as of day 3

must remain isolated until day 7. Someone with COVID-19 who still has a fever or respiratory symptoms until day 10 cannot be released until day 13.

- Individuals with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had ANY symptoms may discontinue home isolation when at least 7 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test and have had no subsequent illness. Information on COVID-19 isolation, including for health care professionals, can found by viewing the [CDC's recommended precautions and risk management recommendations](#), as well as the [Pa. Department of Health's Interim Guidance](#).

What should I do if an employee tests positive for COVID-19?

If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, close contacts of the employee should be notified, but the identity of the person who may have exposed them should not be shared.

Return to work guidance for an employee diagnosed with COVID-19 that does not work in a healthcare setting:

- Stay home for at least seven days after you are tested AND wait until the employee is fever free for 72 hours;
- After encouraging the employee to follow the DOH **isolation** guidelines and consulting with your employee about their condition, the employee may go back to work.

If an employee has had **close contact** with another employee who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, the exposed employee should **quarantine** at home for 14 days.

If an employee did not have close contact with their coworker, they do not need to be sent home but should continue to closely monitor for symptoms. More detailed guidance on exposure risks can be found [here](#).

Employers should practice proper cleaning and sanitizing, especially if an employee has tested positive for COVID-19. More information on proper sanitizing practices can be found [here](#).

What should I do if an employee's household member or close contact tests positive for COVID-19?

Because exposure is considered to be ongoing within the house, household contacts of persons with COVID-19 must be **quarantined** for 14 days after the case has been released from isolation. This means that household contacts will need to remain at home longer than the initial case. The symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure.

Employers should practice proper cleaning and sanitizing, especially if a customer or close contact of an employee has tested positive for COVID-19. More information on proper sanitizing practices can be found [here](#).

Are there resources available for employees who are required to stay home?



As of April 1, certain employees may now be eligible for paid leave through the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#).

Employees with no paid leave may be eligible for [unemployment compensation](#) if they are quarantined or must self-isolate due to COVID-19.

How should I properly clean my facility or workplace?

Employers should practice proper cleaning and sanitizing, especially if an employee has tested positive for COVID-19.

Employers should routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs.

- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection;
- For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available [here](#);
- More detailed guidance on cleaning and disinfecting can be found [here](#).

If persons suspected/confirmed to have COVID-19 have been in the facility, enhanced cleaning and disinfecting should occur.

- It is recommended to close off areas used by the ill persons and wait as long as possible before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets;
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area;
- Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas (e.g., offices, bathrooms, and common areas) used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces;
- When cleaning, the CDC recommends wearing disposable gloves and gowns for all tasks in the cleaning process and washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
- If a sick employee is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, follow the [CDC cleaning and disinfection recommendations](#).

Is there training available for employers and employees on ways to reduce risk of exposure to COVID-19?

All employees should be educated on the [steps to protect themselves](#) from exposure to COVID-19 at work and at home.

OSHA has developed training for employers and employees on occupational exposure risk and protocols for prevention. Training is available [here](#).

What should non-life sustaining businesses do at this time?



Non-life sustaining businesses should continue to follow the Governor's order and have physical locations stay closed until notified that it is safe to reopen. Employees who work for non-life sustaining businesses should stay home. Non-essential businesses are allowed to continue operating virtually.

Businesses that are financially impacted by COVID-19 may be eligible for financial assistance. For more information, visit the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development's [website](#).

What should I do if I know of a non-life sustaining business that is not complying with the Governor's Stay at Home Order?

If you or others become aware there are businesses that are not following the orders set forth by Governor Wolf, please contact your local law enforcement agency through their non-emergency phone number.

What should I do if I'm a business owner and want to help?

The commonwealth is seeking assistance from business owners in obtaining additional medical equipment including, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), hospital supplies, laboratory supplies, and diagnostic supplies and instruments. If your business manufactures, supplies, or distributes these critical groups of equipment, please see the [Critical Medical Supplies Procurement Portal](#).

Questions on the portal can be directed to the Department of General Services at RA-procinternet@pa.gov.