



Lincoln County Health Department
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Recommendations for Businesses Open to the Public

Lincoln County Health Department is here for you during COVID-19

Please follow these recommendations from the Washington State Department of Health, the CDC, and our Public Health Officer, Dr. Ralph Monteagudo to keep you safe and healthy during this time.

Reduce transmission among employees...

Actively encourage sick employees to stay home:

- Employees who have symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) should notify their supervisor and stay home.
- Sick employees should follow CDC-recommended steps. Employees 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.
- Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and follow CDC recommended precautions.

Identify where and how workers might be exposed to COVID-19 at work:

- See the OSHA website in the resources below for more information on how to protect workers from potential exposures and guidance for employers, including steps to take for jobs according to exposure risk.
- Be aware that some employees may be at higher risk for serious illness, such as older adults and those with chronic medical conditions. Consider minimizing face-to-face contact between these employees or assign work tasks that allow them to maintain a distance of six feet from other workers, customers and visitors, or to telework if possible.

Separate sick employees:

- Employees who appear to have symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) upon arrival at work or who become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees, customers, and visitors and sent home.
- If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19 infection, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with



Disabilities Act (ADA). The fellow employees should then self-monitor for symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath).

Educate employees about how they can reduce the spread of COVID-19:

- Employees can take steps to protect themselves at work and at home. Older people and people with serious chronic medical conditions are at higher risk for complications.
- Follow the policies and procedures of your employer related to illness, cleaning and disinfecting, and work meetings and travel.
- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care. Learn what to do if you are sick.
- Inform your supervisor if you have a sick family member at home with COVID-19. Learn what to do if someone in your house is sick.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues in the trash and immediately wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. Learn more about coughing and sneezing etiquette on the CDC website.
- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs. Dirty surfaces can be cleaned with soap and water prior to disinfection. To disinfect, use products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2^{external icon}, the cause of COVID-19, and are appropriate for the surface.
- Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them before and after use.
- Practice social distancing by avoiding large gatherings and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others when possible.



Maintain Healthy Business Operations...

Implement flexible sick leave and supportive policies and practices.

- Ensure that sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of and understand these policies.
- Maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member or take care of children due to school and childcare closures. Additional flexibilities might include giving advances on future sick leave and allowing employees to donate sick leave to each other.
- Employers that do not currently offer sick leave to some or all of their employees may want to draft non-punitive “emergency sick leave” policies.
- Employers should not require a positive COVID-19 test result or a healthcare provider’s note for employees who are sick to validate their illness, qualify for sick leave, or to return to work. Healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely manner.
- Review human resources policies to make sure that policies and practices are consistent with public health recommendations and are consistent with existing state and federal workplace laws (for more information on employer responsibilities, visit the Department of Labor’s [external icon](#) and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s [external icon](#) websites).
- Connect employees to employee assistance program (EAP) resources (if available) and community resources as needed. Employees may need additional social, behavioral, and other services, for example, to cope with the death of a loved one.

Assess your essential functions and the reliance that others and the community have on your services or products.

- Be prepared to change your business practices if needed to maintain critical operations (e.g., identify alternative suppliers, prioritize existing customers, or temporarily suspend some of your operations if needed).
- Identify alternate supply chains for critical goods and services. Some goods and services may be in higher demand or unavailable.
- Talk with companies that provide your business with contract or temporary employees about the importance of sick employees staying home and encourage them to develop non-punitive leave policies.
- Talk with business partners about your response plans. Share best practices with other businesses in your communities (especially those in your supply chain), chambers of commerce, and associations to improve community response efforts.



Determine how you will operate if absenteeism spikes from increases in sick employees, those who stay home to care for sick family members, and those who must stay home to watch their children if dismissed from childcare programs and K-12 schools.

- Plan to monitor and respond to absenteeism at the workplace.
- Implement plans to continue your essential business functions in case you experience higher than usual absenteeism.
- Prepare to institute flexible workplace and leave policies.
- Cross-train employees to perform essential functions so the workplace can operate even if key employees are absent.

Consider establishing policies and practices for social distancing. Social distancing should be implemented as ordered by state authorities. Social distancing means avoiding large gatherings and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others when possible (e.g., breakrooms and cafeterias). Strategies that business could use include:

- Implementing flexible worksites (e.g., telework)
 - Implementing flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts)
 - Increasing physical space between employees at the worksite
 - Increasing physical space between employees and customers (e.g., drive through, partitions)
 - Implementing flexible meeting and travel options (e.g., postpone non-essential meetings or events)
 - Downsizing operations
 - Delivering services remotely (e.g. phone, video, or web)
 - Delivering products through curbside pick-up or delivery
- **Know your resources...**
 - **DOH coronavirus hotline** 1-800-525-0127
 - **Lincoln County Health Department** www.co.lincoln.wa.us/public-health
 - **Washington State Coronavirus Response** www.coronavirus.wa.gov
 - **OSHA** <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>
 - **Centers for Disease Control & Prevention** www.cdc.gov/coronavirus
 - **Washington State Department of Health** www.doh.wa.gov/coronavirus

