



May 27, 2020

## **Guidance for Reopening Public Facilities**

**Purpose:** During these unprecedented times, local governments in New Jersey are continuing to face new challenges that test their ability to continue to provide vital services to their residents while protecting the health, safety and welfare of their employees. State-imposed restrictions and physical conditions are changing somewhat gradually based on the COVID-19 statistics and metrics, and local governments have reached out to the Safety Director's office for additional guidance. The purpose of this bulletin is to provide local government leaders with assistance in preparing to open additional facilities and services to the public based on the most recent directives and advice provided by the CDC, OSHA, and other governmental entities. Please note, the Safety Director's office cannot provide legal advice, and the information contained in this bulletin is based on the sources cited below. Local government officials should consult their local legal counsel for any specific questions concerning their particular situation.

**Sources of Information:** The following sources of information have been utilized in drafting this bulletin. The Safety Director strongly urges all local officials to read and thoroughly familiarize themselves with the recommendations and excellent resource information included in these publications:

- **CDC Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting (Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, and Homes)** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>
- **OSHA Publication 3390-03 2020 – Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19:** <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>
- **CDC Activities and Initiatives Supporting COVID-19 Response and the President's Plan for Opening America Up Again – May 2020:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/php/CDC-Activities-Initiatives-for-COVID-19-Response.pdf>
- **Previous Safety Director Bulletins Concerning COVID-19 Recommendations:** <https://njmel.org/covid-19-updates/>
- **EPA Approved Disinfectants:** <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/disinfectant-use-and-coronavirus-covid-19>
- **COVID-19 Back to Work Strategies and Checklist:** <https://njmel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Back-to-Work-Location-Strategies-Checklist-PowerPoint-presentation.pdf>
- **CORONAVIRUS Vendor Solutions:** <https://njmel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Coronavirus-Vendor-Solutions-May-6-2020.pptx>

**State of New Jersey Restrictions:** Local Governments must adhere to the restrictions imposed by Governor Murphy during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Governor has issued 44 Executive Orders concerning COVID-19, beginning with *Executive Order 103*, issued on March 9, 2020, Declaring a State of Emergency and a Public Health Emergency.

This bulletin is intended for general information purposes only. It should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion regarding any specific or factual situation. Always follow your organization's policies and procedures as presented by your manager or supervisor. For further information regarding this bulletin, contact your Safety Director at 877.398.3046.

All of the Governor's Executive Orders, which serve as the basis for the restrictions imposed, can be found at the following link: [https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo\\_archive.html](https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo_archive.html)

Governor Murphy has modified the restrictions gradually as the public health statistics gradually improve, and he announces any changes during his daily press conferences which are typically held at 1 PM. On May 18, 2020, Governor Murphy outlined his three stage approach for loosening or lifting restrictions based on the COVID-19 public health statistics. A copy of the matrix released by the Governor's office can be found at: <https://njmel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Restoring-Economic-Health-051820-.jpg> . Local officials are strongly urged to monitor the Governor's website for future changes or alterations to the current restrictions.

**Cleaning and Disinfecting:** The CDC recommends a three step process for cleaning and disinfecting workplaces and public facilities: (1) Develop Your Plan, (2) Implement Your Plan, and (3) Maintain and Revise Your Plan.

➤ **Develop Your Plan:** Local government officials are directed to the CDC publication for greater detail: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>

Here are some factors to keep in mind as you move forward with this process:

1. It is vitally important to use EPA-approved disinfectants only, especially for surfaces and objects touched by multiple people. The approved list can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/disinfectant-use-and-coronavirus-covid-19>
2. Always wear gloves appropriate for chemicals being used. Additional PPE may be needed based on the location or the product.
3. Outdoor surfaces may have to be cleaned and disinfected in a different manner.
4. The type of surface may make a difference (i.e. a porous surface versus a non-porous surface) for the cleaning or disinfecting procedure and for the chemicals needed.
5. The following are examples of frequently touched surfaces and objects that will need routine disinfection following reopening:
  - a. Tables
  - b. Doorknobs
  - c. Light switches
  - d. Countertops
  - e. Handles
  - f. Desks
  - g. Phones
  - h. Keyboards
  - i. Toilets
  - j. Faucets and sinks
  - k. Gas pump handles
  - l. Touch screens
6. Hand sanitizer and cleaning wipes should be made available to the employees at all times.
7. For additional guidance, OSHA recommends all employers formulate and adopt an ***Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response Plan***. The plan would include cyclical cold and influenza absences, spikes

in yearly influenza cases, regional and sporadic crises such as H1N1 and the Ebola outbreaks, and ultimately large-scale pandemics such as COVID-19 or the Pandemic of 1918.

- a. The Plan would include basic infection prevention measures such as frequent handwashing, reminding workers to stay home when sick, and encouraging good respiratory etiquette, such as covering a cough or sneeze.
- b. A second part of the Plan would discuss policies and procedures for prompt identification and isolation of sick people, when appropriate.
- c. For more guidance on developing the plan, see:  
<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>.

➤ **Implementation of Your Plan:** The following factors should be considered in this step:

1. Routine cleaning with soap and water prior to disinfection.
2. Read all manufacturer's instructions for the cleaning and disinfection products you will use. Make sure you maintain Safety Data Sheets for those products and make sure all employees assigned to clean are properly informed about the products, use the appropriate PPE, and fully trained.

➤ **Maintain and Revise Your Plan:** The Safety Director recommends the following in addition to the information contained in the CDC publication noted:

1. Take steps to reduce your risk of exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19 during daily activities. Refer to **OSHA Publication 3390-03 2020 – Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19:** <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf> for an excellent explanation of how the virus spreads.
2. On page 8 of the CDC publication found at this link, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>, you will find a list of additional resources under the heading of “Community Locations,” that provide more extensive guidance for specific areas and personnel such as parks and recreation facilities, law enforcement personnel, and correction (jail) facilities.

**Protecting Your Employees and the Public:** Perhaps the most pressing challenge local officials face is how to continue to provide essential services to local residents while protecting employees and the general public. The Safety Director's office recommends consideration of the following:

1. Increasing and enhancing personal safety and social distancing measures for employees who interact with each other and with the general public. Although this would not be feasible for all local government employees, especially the employees who are first responders, an assessment should be conducted to determine the jobs where these controls may be feasible.
2. Many local governments have implemented changes designed to reduce interpersonal contact, and consideration should be given to continuing those practices including:
  - a. Setting up procedures for electronic filing or a physical “drop box” location for permits, licenses, and fee payments (via check), thus reducing one on one contact. Similarly, setting up inspections via telephone or an online procedure.

- b. Preclude public entry into certain offices or areas or, if that is not possible, limiting the number of people permitted in an office or office building based on the space available, and requiring all members of the public and the employees to wear masks.
- c. Establishing new customer workflow routes to reduce interaction within offices and buildings with signage and floor markings.
- d. Permitting “flex scheduling” for employees and consider establishing work “teams” for large offices with dates designated for each team to work. For example, dividing up the workforce into 3 teams, A, B, and C, with Team A working Monday and Wednesday and Friday in Week 1.
- e. Allowing employees with underlying pre-existing health conditions to work from home, if feasible and appropriate based on the assignment.
- f. Employers should familiarize themselves, and especially personnel charged with Human Resources responsibilities with the Federal CARES Act which expands certain employee rights during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here is a link to information on that subject: <https://www.nj.gov/labor/worker-protections/earnedsick/covid.shtml>
- g. Continuing remote public meetings, in accordance with the procedures outlined by the NJ Dept. of Community Affairs.
- h. Consider closing off public water fountains, employee break rooms, and coffee areas until further notice.
- i. Many employers will be instituting daily temperature testing for employees before the employees will be permitted to enter the workspace. More information is available on the options for temperature testing on the ***CORONAVIRUS Vendor Solutions*** Power Point presentation. It is recommended that local officials contact their municipal attorney before implementing mandatory temperature testing to make certain that employees receive proper notice.
- j. If an employee tests positive for the COVID-19 virus, employers should follow the advice and recommendations from the CDC found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/critical-workers/implementing-safety-practices.html>

**Additional Resources:** The Safety Director’s office has created a central repository on the NJ MEL website for updated COVID-19 information, including several bulletins addressing specific subject areas during the COVID-19 pandemic, and that information may be found at: <https://njmel.org/covid-19-updates/https://njmel.org/covid-19-updates/>

The Safety Director’s office would like to remind all public entities that until such time as a vaccine for COVID-19 is widely available, we will be recommending that the health and safety measures outlined herein should be followed. Our office will issue updates and new information as it becomes available.