

# Return to Work Responsibly

*Companies across all industries have been affected to some extent during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many were deemed “non-essential” by state and federal governments, resulting in employers halting operations and closing workplaces. The reopening of workplaces should be conducted in a thorough manner, accounting for factors to protect employees’ health and safety when returning to work.*

## Personal Hygiene

*Good personal hygiene is one of the easiest and most cost-effective ways to prevent the spread of germs between employees in the workplace.*

- Encourage employees to regularly wash hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds



- When soap and water is not available, use hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol)
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue or your elbow, not your hands. Dispose of tissues or other soiled materials immediately after use

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

*Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) helps protect employees from potentially infectious materials and other dangerous substances. It is the last line of defense against exposure to germs and other hazards.*

- Ensure all employees have and are utilizing proper PPE
- PPE may include eye/face protection, gloves, gowns, and respiratory protection

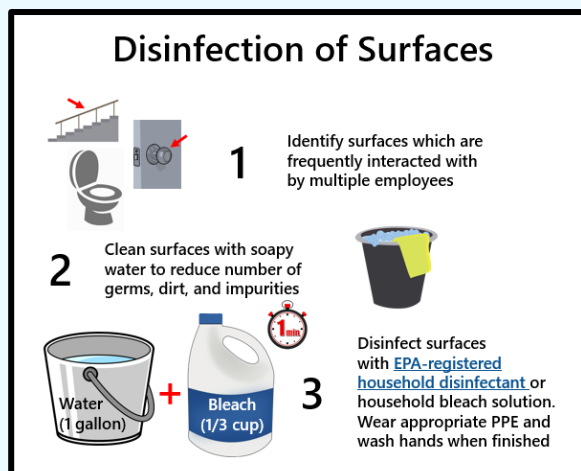
such as N-95 respirators or surgical masks. NOTE: surgical masks and cloth face coverings are not intended to protect the wearer, but those around them

- Due to current PPE shortages, alternate protection methods may be required, such as disinfection and reuse of PPE, or utilization of other face coverings in lieu of proper respiratory protection
- The requirements for respirator fit testing and medical evaluations remain in effect and should be administered by an occupational health or other licensed medical facility, if feasible

## Work Practice Controls

*Employers should implement procedures for building maintenance and care, maintaining physical distance, and mitigating risks for employees.*

- Regularly disinfect frequently used equipment and surfaces. If disinfectant wipes or sprays are not available, a diluted



household bleach solution may also be used. Ensure disposable gloves and other PPE is worn during cleaning operations

- Discourage the use of shared objects (phones, computers, etc.) to the extent possible. When not possible, disinfect before and after use
- Observe social distancing guidelines in the workplace to limit contact and interaction between employees. If possible, reconfigure workstations to allow for adequate distance between employees



- Use visual cues and signage to control entry, exit, and the flow of foot traffic through the workplace. Do NOT obstruct emergency evacuation routes
- Stagger the return of employees and utilize alternate or rotating schedules when possible. This will help to control facility capacity and employee interaction
- Administer daily symptom screenings and temperature checks for employees before the start of each shift. Utilize safe practices for the screener such as barriers, gloves, cleaning thermometers, etc.
- Limit visitor access and interaction with facility personnel when possible

## Employee Training

*Educating employees on new policies, procedures, and PPE is important in maintaining a healthy work environment. However, training may pose its own challenges for employers under COVID-19.*

- To comply with social distancing guidelines, alternate methods for administering training may be necessary, such as electronic distribution of information or holding smaller training sessions to allow for adequate distance between attendees
- Employers should provide training on new or updated policies, procedures, and PPE resulting from COVID-19. This may include proper use of PPE, disinfecting methods, sick-time policies, etc.
- Employees should be educated on signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and instructed to stay home from work if feeling ill
- Employees should be instructed to stay home if knowingly exposed to an individual with COVID-19

## Safe to Return to Work?

*Is it safe for your employees to return to work?*

- Employees should be encouraged to stay home if feeling ill, without fear of termination
- Employers should develop plans to address the safe return of employees to work following an illness
- Employees in high-risk populations should consult with a doctor before returning to work
- Ensure employees receive eligible benefits according to the Families First Coronavirus Response Act

## Additional Resources

[Delaware Office of Safety and Health Consultation](#)

[CDC: COVID-19](#)

[CDC: Decontamination and Reuse of Filtering Facepiece Respirators](#)

[American Industrial Hygiene Association: Workplace Cleaning for COVID-19](#)

[National Safety Council SAFER Framework](#)

[CDC: Workplaces During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

[OSHA: Worker Exposure Risk to COVID-19](#)

[Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#)