

2020

RETURN TO WORK

MITIGATION PLAN
POST COVID-19



WORDS FROM ATN



The Alabama Technology Network (ATN), an entity of the Alabama Community College System and local MEP center, developed a Return to Work Plan as a response to COVID-19 to help guide small business and industry in their effort to resume operations. ATN's plan is based on COVID-19 guidance and best practices as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Alabama Department of Public Health and other governmental regulations and guidelines as announced. This plan is available to anyone that seeks direction on employees returning to work. In addition, ATN staff, who has extensive manufacturing experience in Environmental Health and Safety, Industrial Hygiene and Food Safety will be available to answer any questions remotely and aid individual companies with a personalized plan. For questions regarding the Return to Work Plan or to receive a personalized plan for your company, please contact [**returntowork@atn.org**](mailto:returntowork@atn.org).

As the MEP (Manufacturing Extension Partnership) center in Alabama, ATN provides companies with services and access to public and private resources to enhance growth, improve productivity, reduce costs and expand capacity.

LEGAL DISCLAIMER



The purpose of this document is to suggest ideas you may wish to consider as your business/industry moves towards reopening in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is no one size fits all solution. Before implementing any of the ideas suggested in this document you should evaluate and independently determine, with the assistance of your legal counsel as appropriate, the legality and effectiveness of the potential application of the suggested idea to the particular circumstances of your company/business. As the intent of this document is to provide suggested ideas for your independent consideration only, Alabama Technology Network accepts no responsibility for any result or circumstances arising from or related to your decision to put to use or not use any idea suggested herein. This is a living document which is subject to revision or further development at any time.

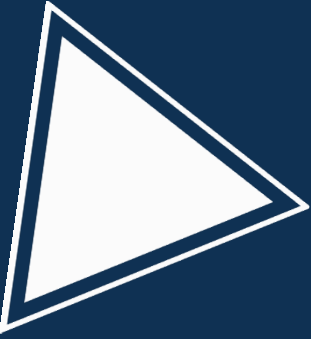


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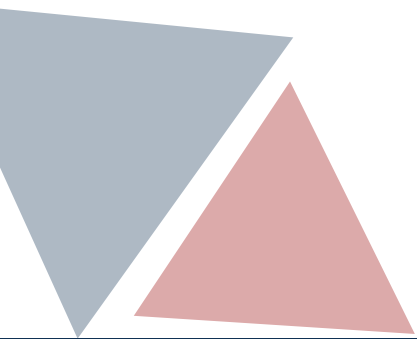
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PURPOSE

To **educate** business and industry on the return to work protocols and procedures implemented for safety and protection.

1. **Scope**

- To set expectations for employee behaviors that will help mitigate risk at work and at home
- To provide employees information and resources regarding health and wellness

2. **General Overview**

- Objectives
- Resuming Operations
- PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)
- Disinfection Protocol
- Self-Distancing
- Employee Monitoring
- Possible Positive for COVID-19
- Signage
- References
- Return to Work Checklist

OBJECTIVES

To **ensure** the health and wellness of each employee and visitor.

a. Implement Measures

- Install additional sanitizing dispensers and guidelines for frequent cleaning on overly used surfaces and common areas
- Manage shift changes and stagger lunch breaks to allow time to thoroughly disinfect common areas and promote social distancing
- Place signage throughout facilities to remind employees of proper preventative measures

b. Establish Disinfection Protocols

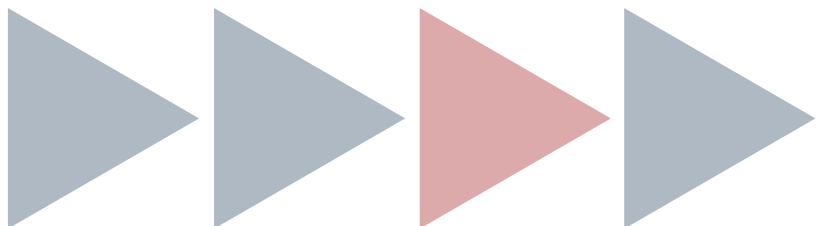
[Reference Disinfection Protocol on page 12](#)

- Disinfection measures are put in place and are taken routinely, based on frequency to disinfect workplace surfaces, chairs, tables, etc. and protect employees ([WHO Workplace Ready](#))
- Completely sanitized and disinfected facilities
- Disinfection protocol will be followed regularly
- Deep-cleaning and disinfection protocol is triggered when an active employee tests positive for COVID-19 by a medical doctor; the deep-cleaning must be carried out by an external, professional service
- The baseline of clean will be upheld

c. Establishing Social Distancing Procedures ([Alabama Mandatory Health Order](#))

[Reference Self-Distancing on page 14](#)

- Social distancing is an effective method that helps prevent the spread of the virus. Social distance means:
 - Staying at least 6-feet from others
 - Eliminating contact with others, such as handshakes, embracing coworkers, visitors or friends
 - Avoid touching commonly used surfaces
 - Avoid individuals that appear ill



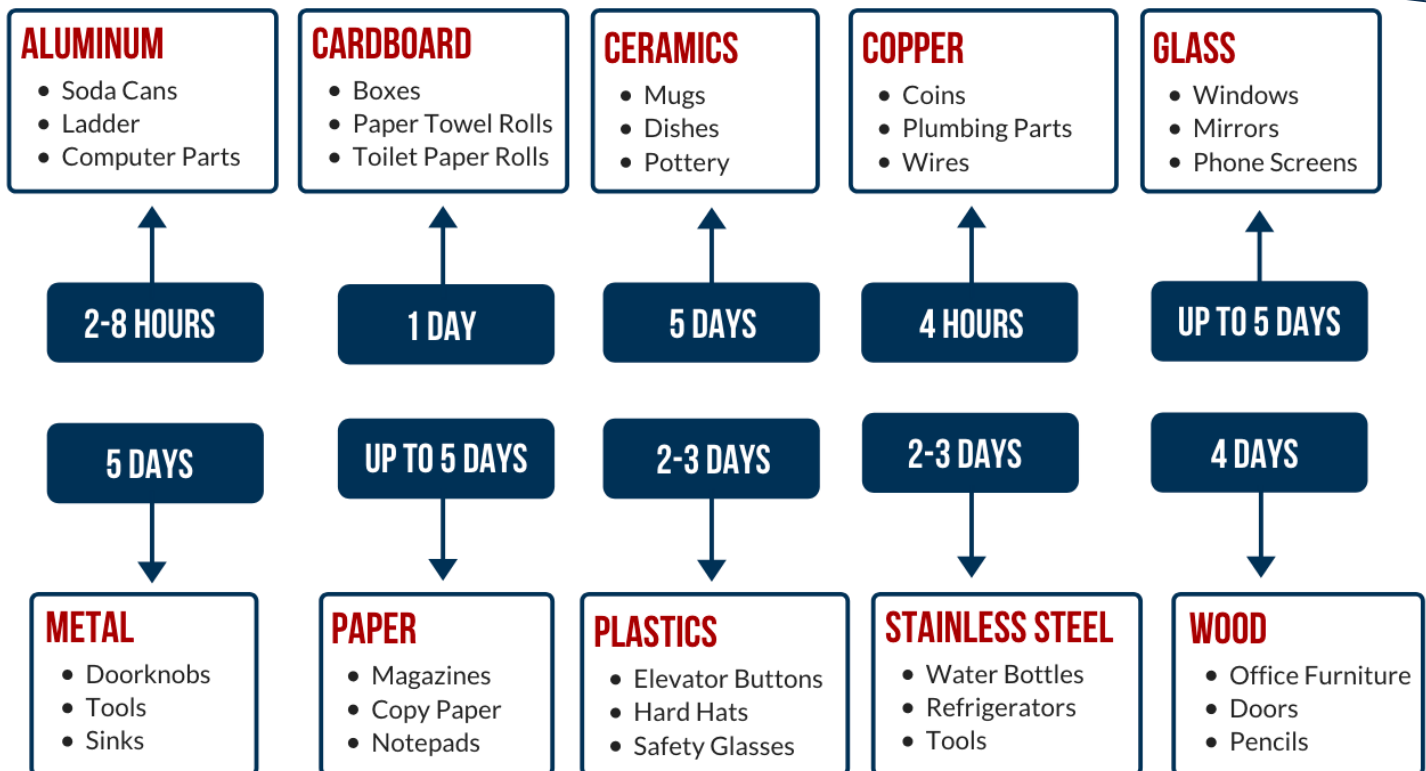
d. Hazard Analysis for Cleaning Tasks and Wellness

- Hazard Analysis is created to establish overall wellness and disinfection protocols for each work area. The hazard analysis must include:
 - General Disinfection Measures (page 12)
 - On-site Health Screening
 - Daily Self Screening Protocol
 - Self-quarantining and Return to Work Protocol
 - Visitors and Contractors Self Screening (page 19)
- Return to Work Checklist

RESUMING OPERATIONS

If a **facility** has been vacant for over seven days, the need for a deep clean is minimized. The longest the virus can live on a hard or soft surface is five days. (See diagram below)

**HOW LONG
COVID-19 LIVES
ON SURFACES**
*Source



If a facility has **not** been closed and/or vacant for seven days, the following steps must be taken:

1. The company or an external professional service must clean the following:

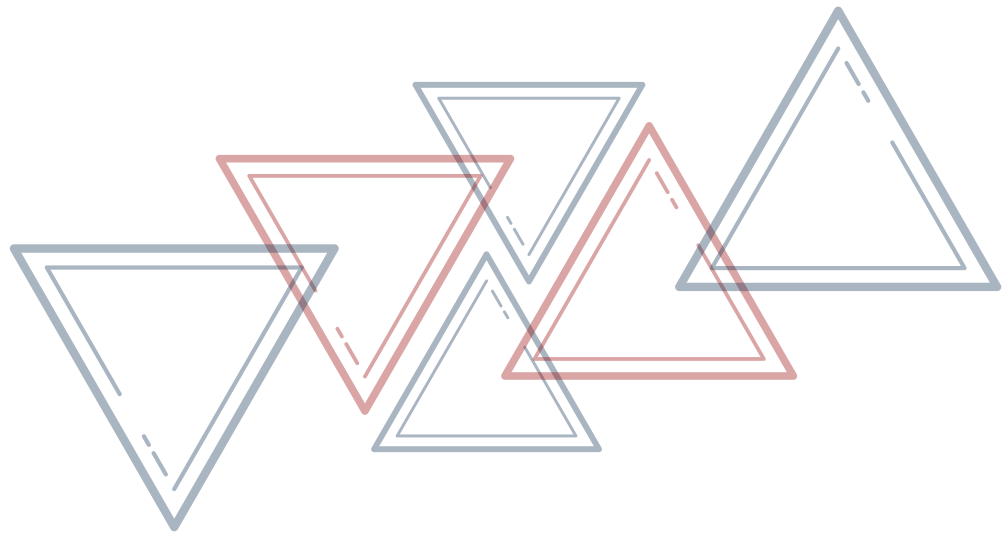
a. All hard surfaces including:

- Doorknobs
- Light Switches/Machine Switches
- Tables
- Counter Tops
- Faucets/handles
- Handrails
- Desks
- Keyboards
- Phones
- Tools
- Screens
- Water Fountains
- Toilets
- Sinks
- Towel Dispensers
- Forklift/Tuggers
- Machine Controls
- Time Clocks
- Turnstiles
- Common Area Objects
- Vending Machines

- b. The company or an external professional service must clean with soap and water followed by disinfecting with one of the following:
 - Diluted household bleach solution (1/3 cup bleach to 1-gallon water)
 - Alcohol solution that is at least **70%** alcohol
 - EPA Registered Household Disinfectant (CDC Disinfecting Business Facility)
 - c. While cleaning, employees or an external professional service must wear:
 - Respiratory protection, N95 or alternative classes of NIOSH-approved respirators (OSHA N95 Guidance)
 - Eye protection such as safety glasses or face shields
 - Disposable gloves made out of latex, nitrile or vinyl
 - Disposable gowns
 - d. Soft surfaces such as chairs and carpet must also be cleaned
 - e. Specialized cleaning should be performed if requested by the manufacturing company
2. HVAC filters must be cleaned, disinfected or replaced
 3. Before work begins, each employee shall be informed of the following:
 - a. How the initial cleaning was completed
 - b. How to protect oneself on a daily basis
 - c. How to clean each workspace throughout the day
 - d. Protocol for an employee testing positive for COVID-19
 4. When at work, follow protocol of who to contact if feeling ill
 - a. First, contact a supervisor with the proper authority
 - b. Second, the supervisor will seek medical attention, who will test the employee for possible symptoms
 - If positive, the proper authorities will be notified and employee must be isolated until screened

- c. *The supervisor will document employee name, date and time and decide if the employee remains at work or is sent home
 - If the employee is sent home, the supervisor will
 1. Initiate a deep cleaning protocol
 2. Employees will be notified of a possible infected worker
 3. The company will investigate to determine if the infection occurred at work for possible OSHA documentation
- Reference Monitor and Detection on page 18

*To properly execute this plan, it is in the best interest of the company to establish a team of individuals or supervisor that will be given authority to make decisions in the best interest of the company. During the return to work period, focus on monitoring employees, sanitation of the facility and equipment and other essential duties described throughout this plan.



PPE (PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT)

In **addition** to the normal everyday PPE, the company must provide the following:

1. Respirators of N95 or alternative classes of NIOSH-approved respirators (OSHA N95 Guidance) issued to
 - a. Deep Cleaning Staff
 - b. Onsite Screening Team
 - c. First Responders
 - d. Employees with Broad Exposure
 - Cafeteria Workers
 - Security Guards
 - Receptionists
 - Shipping/Receiving Employees
 - Employees Working Closer than 6-Feet (pg. 14)
2. Face shields issued to
 - a. Onsite Screening Team
 - b. First Responders
3. Gloves made of latex, nitrile or vinyl issued to
 - a. Onsite Screening Team
 - b. First Responders
 - c. Employees Working Closer than 6-Feet (pg. 14)
 - d. Respective personnel when recommended by the cleaning/disinfecting product being used

The CDC indicated that gloves do not protect individuals against COVID-19 because the virus does not enter the body through the hands
4. Disposable gowns issued to
 - a. Deep Cleaning Staff
 - b. Onsite Screening Team
 - c. First Responders



DISINFECTION PROTOCOL

Guidance for **disinfection** of hard nonporous surfaces is to use a one-part household bleach to ten-part water solution (10% chlorine bleach solution). You may also use five (5) tablespoons per gallon, or four (4) teaspoons per quart. The solution must be made daily and left on a surface to clean for a minimum of five (5) minutes. A list of alternative household disinfectants can be found on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website. The EPA manages a pesticide registration which includes **List N: Disinfectants for the use Against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)**. The following information is provided for each disinfectant:

- EPA Registration Number
- Active Ingredient(s)
- Product Name
- Company (Manufacturer)
- Direction to Follow for Comparable Virus Type
- Contact Time – Minutes the Surface Should be Treated, Visibly Wet for the Duration of Contact Time
- Formulation Type
- Surface Types for Use – Porous and Nonporous
- Use Site – Where the Disinfectant May be Used
- Emerging Viral Pathogen Claim – If yes, it is effective against a harder-to-kill virus than human coronavirus
- Date Added to List N

1. **Responsibility of the Employee**

- a. To understand expectations, limitations, and processes for the responsibilities for decontamination
- b. Exercise sanitary practices - Limit direct touching of objects, equipment and surfaces in common areas
- c. Practice good personal hygiene
 - Self-clean your work area before break, lunch and end of shift
 - Wash hands multiple times a day with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds
 - Cover coughs, maintain social distancing and clean other visited areas; this is important to keep yourself and others safe

2. Responsibility of the Company

- a. Train employees on decontamination expectations, including frequency, methods and safety precautions
- b. Develop protocol for decontaminating machinery/equipment, common areas, offices and other occupied areas
- c. Ensure adequate supply of approved decontamination materials
- d. Properly dispose materials used for decontamination and PPE
- e. Determine the limit of decontamination for company, employee and when a third party is used
- f. Prevent shaking of clothes and appropriate PPE to reduce the risk of contamination. Wash in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations using warm water, drying completely and potentially use a disinfectant from EPA's List N. Special consideration shall be given for certain items, like flame resistant clothing

Decontamination Frequency Accountability Chart

Area	Designated Responsible Party	Signature	Decontamination Agent	Contact Time	✓	Frequency
Desk/Office	Individual Employee		Appropriate diluted bleach solution or another agent from List N (See Above)	List agent corresponding time according to List N		Twice a day, prior to lunch, and end of day
Work Area	Individual Employee					Prior to breaks and lunch.
						At end of day.
Common Areas	Cleaning Crew					Before and after occupancy (i.e., meetings, breaks, lunch)
Isolation Area	Cleaning Crew					After each occupancy

3. Emergency Procedures

Reference Procedures for Suspected Infection on page 20

- a. If decontamination is not feasible, consider a 72-hour shutdown to allow the virus to naturally deactivate

SELF-DISTANCING

Self-distancing, also known as **social distancing**, is one of the primary ways to avoid contracting a virus or contamination. It is imperative that employees maintain proper self-distancing, as recommended by the CDC and other health organizations. This means that a minimum of 6-feet (2 meters) must be maintained between employees, at all times, even when workers are wearing protective equipment. Also, avoid gathering in groups, entering crowded areas, carpooling with others that live outside of your home, hugging, shaking hands, eating face-to-face and similar activities that would put you and/or others in close proximity that would increase the risk of contamination. ([CDC Social Distancing Guidelines](#))

Prior to resuming operations, duties that require employees to work within 6-feet of each other must be evaluated using the company's hazard analysis (page 7) for potential health and wellness risks, in addition to protocol to ensure the protection for each employee.

The following instructions are established to help maintain proper self-distancing:

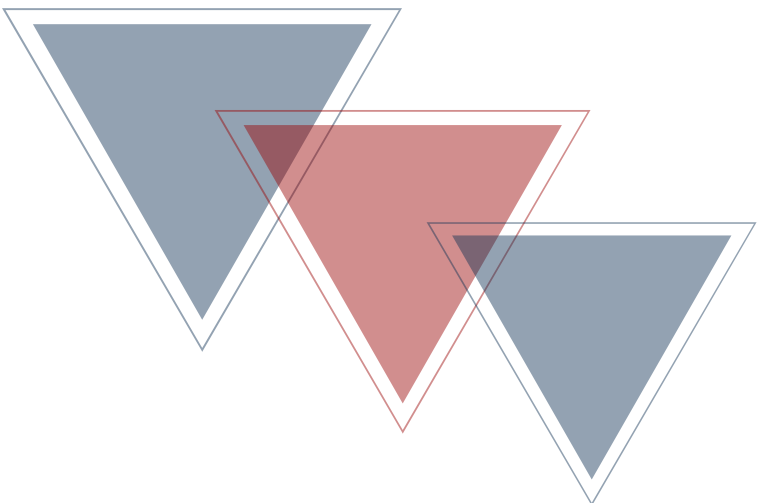
1. Workstations

- a. Remain isolated when possible
- b. Maintain 6-feet of separation between yourself and the nearest co-worker at all times
- c. Companies must ensure that desks are not facing each other unless guarded by a cubicle wall or other similar barriers
- d. Designate one-way walking paths to and from workstations to avoid close proximity of co-workers including offices, warehouses, storage areas or similar area where traffic is common
- e. Duties that require employees to work within 6-feet of each other or if workstations do not allow 6-feet of separation, require the following:
 - Use barriers such as plexiglass, cardboard, plyboard or other similar barriers
 - Engineering controls must be considered prior to work beginning, including the option of eliminating duties, if possible, until the outbreak has subsided



- Redesigning jobs to allow duties to be completed by one person, introducing tools to assist with jobs that allow 6-feet of distance or any other option that allows work to be completed while maintaining a 6-feet distance
 - If work **cannot** be redesigned then employees must be provided a face mask, proper gloves to avoid contact of the skin on tools and parts, a face-shield, if determined it is pertinent and any other protective equipment that would be deemed essential to protect the health of each employee
 - Immediately following duties that require work of close proximity, all employees involved shall properly remove PPE without touching the outside of the PPE, wash hands thoroughly for a minimum of 20 seconds as recommended by health officials and authorities and when necessary wash arms and face. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least **60%** alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Avoid touching eyes, mouth and nose with unwashed hands. (CDC Prevention) **Note**, a minimum of 60% and 70% alcohol-based solutions are listed in this plan. According to the CDC, the 60% solution is for cleaning hands and personal hygiene, whereas the 70% solution is for cleaning surfaces, equipment, tools and any other work-related area or item
- f. Avoid sharing tools or other equipment, if possible
 - g. When equipment is shared, such as powered industrial trucks, ladders, rolling carts, copy machines and computers, the operator is required to properly disinfect equipment using the [Disinfection Protocol on page 12](#)
 - h. Prior to shift changes, the employee working is required to properly disinfect the workstation and all components using the [Disinfection Protocol on page 12](#)

- i. Avoid coming within 6-feet of outside personnel. Including, those making deliveries, such as truck drivers, parcel workers, post office personnel or other individuals coming onsite. To maintain self-distancing, the following instructions must be followed:
 - Do **not** receive items directly from delivery personnel. Rather, allow the driver to place items down and back away prior to pick up
 - If the use of a dolly or hand truck is used by delivery personnel within the facility, ensure it is disinfected properly and thoroughly using the [Disinfection Protocol on page 12](#)
 - j. During training and meetings a minimum distance of 6-feet must be maintained by employees
 - k. Employees shall **not** sit directly across from one another
2. **Breakrooms**
- a. Employees must maintain proper self-distancing
 - b. Employees shall **not** sit directly next to or across from one another
 - c. Minimize touching objects such as vending machines, coolers, refrigerators and other commonly shared breakroom items
 - d. If a breakroom item is touched, employee must immediately wash hands and/or use hand sanitizing procedure
 - e. Prior to exiting the breakroom, properly disinfect all items that were used with the [Disinfection Protocol on page 12](#)
 - f. When possible, use separate doors to enter and exit the breakroom to avoid close proximity with other employees



3. Lunch Area/Cafeterias

- a. Breakroom guidelines apply
- b. Food service personnel must wear masks and gloves at all times while serving
- c. The use of disposables such as plates, cups and utensils must only be distributed
- d. Self-service must **not** be allowed

4. Restrooms

- a. Social distancing guidelines must be maintained in restrooms, including waiting in lines
- b. All employees must thoroughly and properly disinfect hands when finished
- c. Restrooms must stay sanitary, dispose of paper products properly and completely flush toilets
- d. If possible, restroom doors shall remain open to avoid repeated contact by employees
- e. If possible, restrooms must have pathways designated to avoid close proximity of employees

5. Shift Changes

- a. Do **not** congregate in parking lots or other onsite areas prior to or after work shifts
- b. Maintain 6-feet of distance between you and other employees while entering and exiting the facility
- c. One-way entry and exit pathways should be established to avoid face-to-face encounters
- d. The entry and exit doors, as well as any other interior doors deemed necessary, should remain open during shift changes to avoid employee contact
- e. Avoid directly touching the time clock, use items such as gloves or q-tips

MONITOR AND DETECTION

One of the **difficulties** about COVID-19 is the long incubation period, which is the period from initial infection until the onset of symptoms. One can be harboring the virus inside his or her body and not know it; all while, it is possible to spread the virus to others. (CDC Protecting Yourself and Others)

Should self-distancing fail to prevent the spread of the virus, it is also important that employees be monitored/observed/screened for the display of symptoms. This can include several aspects:

- Self-screening
- Observation of symptoms by co-workers
- Monitoring of symptoms (including fever) by employer

1. Self-Screening at Home

One of the most vital aspects of detection involves self-screening. In order to adequately communicate these procedures to employees, the employer should issue a self-screening checklist for all employees for voluntary, home self-screening prior to returning to work. (CDC Guidance for Business Plan and Response)

The screening should consist of the following questions:

1. Do you have a temperature of 100.4 fahrenheit or greater?
2. Do you have a cough?
3. Are you experiencing a shortness of breath?
4. Are you having difficulty breathing?
5. Are you experiencing unusual fatigue?

If the answer to any of these questions is “Yes”, employees are requested to stay at home until **ALL THREE** of the following are true:

- You have been fever free for at least 72 hours (three full days) without taking medication such as acetaminophen or aspirin to reduce fever
- Other symptoms such as cough or shortness of breath are gone
- It has been at least seven days since your symptoms first appeared, or you have been tested for COVID-19 and had two negative tests in a row, at least 24 hours apart



2. Observations of Symptoms at Work

If an employee observes a coworker exhibiting symptoms of the virus the symptomatic employee should be instructed to report to their immediate supervisor. The employee's body temperature should be monitored for fever. If fever is detected, then a decision must be made to determine whether the employee should be isolated for further observation, transported to a medical facility where better care is available or advise the employee to return to his or her home to quarantine. Detailed instructions for each of these possibilities are located in this guide. ([CDC Guidance for Business Plan and Response](#))

3. Monitoring by Employer

Employers have the authority to set up a monitoring station at the facility's entrance. In addition, a monitoring station may be set up in the parking lot entrance. ([CDC Employers' Guidance](#))

If implemented, please consider the following:

- a. Health screening team that will monitor symptoms of individuals entering the facility
- b. Close alternative entrances to ensure all employees pass through a monitoring station
- c. Use no-touch thermometers to evaluate employee's body temperature
- d. If an employee exhibits a fever, he or she should be sent home to self-quarantine or to pursue medical attention



PROCEDURES FOR SUSPECTED INFECTION

Employers should **assess** hazards that employees may be exposed to; evaluate the risk of exposure; and select, implement and ensure employees use controls to prevent exposure. Control measures may include a combination of engineering and administrative, safe work practices and PPE.

1. Identification & Isolation

- a. Identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a critical first step in protecting workers, visitors and others
- b. Immediately isolate individuals suspected of having COVID-19 (based on the identification routes in the previous section), which may be any location away from others and door closed
- c. In a watercraft, aircraft or other confined space, without compromising safety, move potentially infectious individuals away from passengers and crew
- d. Take steps to limit the spread of the individual's infectious respiratory secretions, including providing a facemask or other facial covering
Note: A surgical mask on a patient or ill person should **not** be confused with PPE for a worker; the surgical mask acts to contain potentially infectious respiratory secretions at the nose and mouth
- e. Restrict the number of individuals entering isolation areas
- f. Protect employees in close contact* with sick individuals by using additional engineering and administrative controls, safe work practices and PPE

*CDC defines close contact as being within 6-feet of an infected person while not wearing recommended PPE. Close contact also includes instances where there is direct contact with infectious secretions while not wearing recommended PPE. Close contact generally does not include brief interactions, such as walking past a person.

2. Following Isolation

After isolation, the next steps depend on the workplace. For example:

a. In most workplaces:

- Isolated individuals should leave the work site as soon as possible depending on the severity of the individual's illness, the other employees have choices:
 - May be able to return home
 - May choose to seek medical care on his or her own

3. PPE for Responders

Guidance for PPE use for medical response personnel is addressed by the CDC for personnel in medical facilities. ([CDC Guidance](#))

Any reusable PPE must be properly cleaned, decontaminated and maintained after and between use. Facilities should adopt procedures and perform a job safety analysis for addressing COVID-19 exposure. The PPE recommended when caring for a patient who tested positive or is suspected to have COVID-19 includes:

a. Respirator or Facemask

- A N95 respirator, higher-level respirator, or facemask must be worn before entry into a isolation area. Higher level respirators include other disposable filtering facepiece respirators, PAPRs or elastomeric respirators
- Disposable respirators and facemasks should be removed and discarded after exiting the isolation area and closing the door
- Perform proper hand hygiene after removing the respirator or facemask
 - Reusable respirators must be cleaned and disinfected according to manufacturer's reprocessing instructions prior to reuse (e.g., empowered air purifying respirators)

* Cloth face coverings are not PPE and should not be worn for the care of patients

b. Eye Protection

- Use eye protection (goggles or a disposable face shield that cover the front and sides of the face) upon entry to the isolation area. Personal eyeglasses and contact lenses are **not** considered adequate eye protection
- Remove eye protection before exiting the isolation area
- Reusable eye protection must be cleaned and disinfected according to manufacturer's reprocessing instructions prior to reuse
Disposable eye protection should be discarded after use unless there is a shortage of PPE and protocols are in place for extended use

c. Gloves

- Use clean, non-sterile gloves upon entry into the isolation area
 - Change gloves if they become torn or heavily contaminated
- Remove and discard gloves when exiting the isolation area, and immediately perform proper hand hygiene

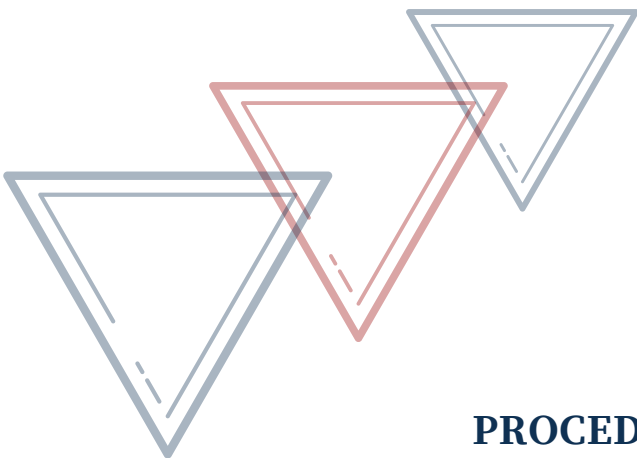
d. Gowns

- Use a clean gown upon entry into the isolation area. Change gown if it becomes soiled. Remove and discard gown in a dedicated waste container before exiting
- Disposable gowns should be discarded after use
- Cloth gowns should be laundered after each use

Facilities should work with their health department and healthcare coalition to address shortages of PPE. The CDC website referenced above also addresses extended use of equipment due to PPE shortages.

4. Environmental Cleaning and Decontamination

When individuals touch a contaminated surface or object and then touch their own eyes, nose or mouth, they may expose themselves to the virus



SIGNAGE

Signage is an **inexpensive** component that can be used to help convey important information. Below are some ideas on how to create your own sign and examples of signs that you can print for free.

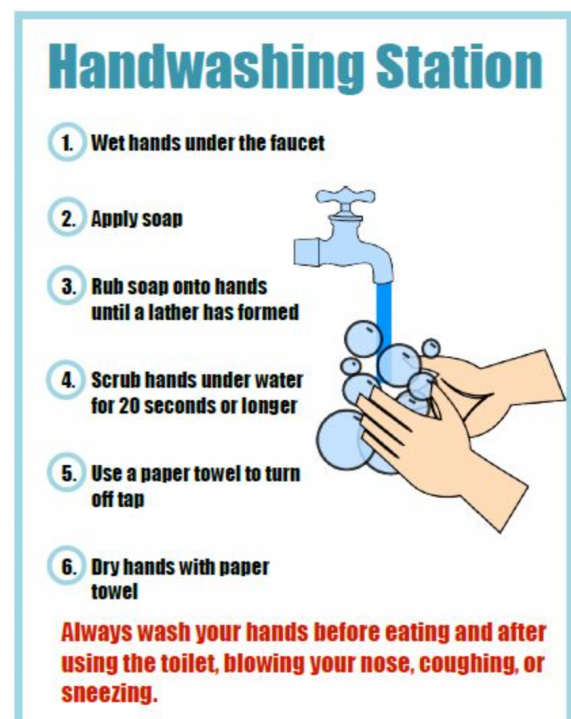
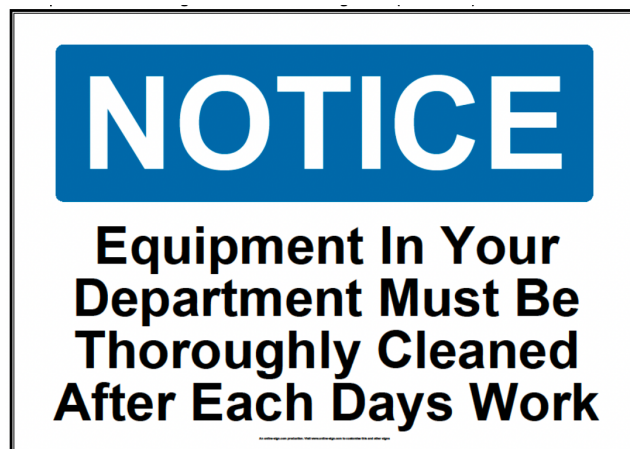
1. Facility Sign Type

- a. Letter size
 - 8.5" x 11" /A4
 - Orientation portrait (vertical)
 - Material: regular paper
- b. Poster Size
 - 30" x 40" /76cm x 100 cm
 - Orientation portrait (vertical)
 - Material: foam core

2. Location Suggestions

- a. Outside exterior doors
- b. Cafeteria entrances
- c. Inside exterior doors
- d. Outside bathroom doors
- e. Inside bathrooms
- f. Throughout plant/facility/office

3. Signage examples from online-sign.com and printablesigns.net



REFERENCES

Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH)

[Mandatory Health Orders Due to Risks Caused by COVID-19](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

[Coronavirus Guidance Business Response](#)

[Essential Critical Workers Dos and Dents](#)

[Infection Control Recommendations](#)

[Prevent Getting Sick](#)

[Disinfecting Your Home](#)

Environmental Protection Agency:

[List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2](#)

Online Signs:

www.online-signs.com

www.printablesigns.net

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA):

[Enforcement Guidance for Respiratory Protection](#)

WebMD:









[How Long Coronavirus Lives on Surfaces](#)

World Health Organization (WHO):

[Advice For Public](#)



RETURN TO WORK CHECKLIST

	Cleaning crew received training about the disinfection method and frequency	<input type="checkbox"/>
	10% chlorine bleach solution (sodium hypochlorite solution) made daily, used when appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Cleaning conducted on all common work surfaces, offices, and conference rooms	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Cleaning conducted in break areas (dispensers, vending machines, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Cleaning conducted in all company vehicles and equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Cleaning conducted on floors, walls, multi-use areas, and restrooms	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Clean, disinfect or replace HVAC filters	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Social distancing protocol in place to prevent close proximity of employees including one-way paths	<input type="checkbox"/>