

SAFE WORKPLACES: GUIDANCE FOR STATE AGENCY LEADERS IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND ENHANCED SAFETY MEASURES

Introduction

On February 7, 2020, the Virginia Commissioner of Health declared COVID-19 a Communicable Disease of Public Health Threat for Virginia. On March 2nd, Governor Northam declared a state of emergency. In the weeks and months that have since followed, state agencies transitioned to a new model of business operations. For many, this meant moving into a virtual environment, working remotely and serving customers online. For others, this meant changing work processes and procedures to minimize contact with others while staying at the workplace. It is recognized that every state employee has experienced some type of change or challenge resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Across Virginia, we took action to reduce the spread of COVID-19. As our efforts have demonstrated success, we are now entering a period of time to reopen our doors to the public and allow for onsite services to be made available again. This document has been developed to provide agency leaders with information needed to drive decisions and move Virginia forward to coincide with Executive Order 61 (2020) and any others that follow.

Just as Governor Northam laid out a phased approach for reopening Virginia, agency leaders are now asked to develop their plan for continued, full service operations. Our goal is not to simply return to business as normal, but rather continue this period of transformation and change. In doing so, we will make decisions that are innovative, cost effective and support workforce models that enhance our ability to attract and retain tomorrow's needed talent.

Phase I looks like this:

- Safer at home—especially if you are vulnerable
- No social gatherings of more than 10 individuals
- Continued social distancing
- Continued teleworking
- Face coverings recommended in public
- Revised business limitations



Phase I could last two to four weeks or longer.

Phase II Looks like this:

- Stay at home for vulnerable populations
- No social gatherings of more than 50 individuals
- Continued physical distancing
- Continued teleworking
- Face coverings recommended in public
- Further easing business limitations

Phase II could last two to four weeks or longer.

Phase III looks like this:

- Safer at home for vulnerable populations
- Remove ban on social gatherings
- Remove capacity limits in establishments
- Continued heightened cleaning and disinfection
- Possible other measures

Phase III could be 10-12 weeks away, or more.

Agencies will need to develop a plan that closely aligns with the timeframes noted in each phase while being flexible to adjust as needed.

Plan for Safe Worksites

Guiding Principles

Prior to opening a worksite to the public or returning employees, agency leadership must establish a plan with the following principles in mind.

Safety First: Review and follow all guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Virginia Department of Health (VDH). Employers have a responsibility to ensure a [safe work environment](#).

Telework: Services that have been provided successfully by remote workers should continue. **All employees that are able to telework should continue to do so.** This will be helpful in easing employees back into an office environment when necessary and will also assist agencies in continuing physical distancing practices.

We are all in this Together: A one size fits all approach and plan will not be likely as the Commonwealth has a variety of agencies that provide diverse services to diverse customers. Your plan may be very different from others. Differences in agency missions, workforce demographics, geographic community spread, facilities, and resources will influence and be a factor in reopening decisions.

Determine Who Returns

Agencies should align the need for onsite staffing with the need for public facing services and in consideration of the businesses being opened in accordance with Executive Order 61 (2020) and any updates or new Executive Orders that follow. Agency plans must be driven by the need to provide services to citizens and businesses along with the anticipated exposure to the COVID-19 virus based on the types of positions within an agency and the services offered.

When a decision is made to open a facility to the public or returning employees to a state worksite, the following should be considered.

- What services must be performed onsite?
 - What services must be handled in person?
 - What services can be performed in a virtual environment?
 - What services are not being performed that must start again?
 - Consider when and how these service will start again.
- From which facilities will services be provided?
 - For agencies with multi-site facilities, determine if it is necessary to open all facilities at once.
 - Will staggering services and work sites be helpful? This may be a reasonable approach to managing staff availability, physical distancing and preventing future absenteeism issues.
- What public service hours will be provided?
 - Will hours be expanded or reduced? Vary by day?
 - Will the service hours include designated hours for vulnerable populations such as individuals over the age of 65 and those with underlying medical conditions?
- Which employees may more safely return to the workplace?

- Employees 65 and older and those with underlying medical conditions are at a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. In addition, some employees may live with or have direct care responsibilities for members in a vulnerable population.

Each agency should document the decisions made in response to the questions in this document. These decisions will be critical for future communications at the appropriate time to the public, employees, staffing agencies, vendors and others such as building owners in a leased facility.

Agencies should also think through these guidelines being mindful of worksite operations that have continued and make any needed adjustments to align with the most current [Guidelines for All Business Sectors](#).

Personal and Worksite Safety

Vulnerable Groups

Be mindful of employees and customer groups that may be more vulnerable to severe illness from COVID-19. These more vulnerable groups include those over the age of 65 and those with underlying medical conditions. Vulnerable employees should be encouraged to self-identify and agencies should take particular care to reduce their risk of exposure while making sure to be compliant with relevant laws like the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act.

In working through your plan, agencies must give thought to service delivery requirements, as well as, employee needs within vulnerable populations. Consider offering vulnerable employees with options to change work processes or change work locations to minimize contact with customers and other employees. Where possible, consider continued teleworking or other physical distancing measures within an office environment.

Cleaning Supplies

Environmental and personal hygiene is a critical factor in reducing and eliminating the spread of COVID-19. Agency leadership is responsible for determining what supplies will be needed for a worksite and working through the state's procurement processes and mandatory sources to obtain any needed supplies. It is recommended that agencies ensure sanitizing wipes and alcohol based hand sanitizer are available to all employees and where applicable to any public visitor prior to reopening or returning to more expanded in-person services.

Agencies must ensure that the cleaning materials used are made for usage on the surface being cleaned. For example, a wood desk may be cleaned with a different product than a computer keyboard. [EPA-approved disinfectants can be found here.](#)

Face Coverings

The CDC recommends the use of face coverings when physical distancing is difficult to continuously maintain. The nature of business conducted by some agencies may require customers and employees to wear a face covering depending on the amount and proximity of interaction with others. Agency leadership will need to determine if customers and employees will need to wear a face covering. You will also need to ensure customers, managers and employees understand that wearing a face covering is not a substitute for physical distancing.

Please follow CDC guidance to ensure cloth face coverings are not placed on young children under the age of 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.

Face Covering Recommended

As face coverings are recommended, agencies are encouraged to supply face coverings to employees and when possible, to customers who do not have their own while visiting a state worksite. Face coverings should follow guidance provided by the [CDC](#) and the VDH.

When using a face covering in the worksite, address each of the following:

- Use of the face covering when in a vehicle with another individual.
- Understand that a face covering may be removed if it impedes vision, if an employee has a medical condition, or if it would create an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task.
- Acknowledge that the face covering may be removed to eat or drink during breaks and lunch periods, however, at those times, physical distancing should be practiced.
- Acknowledge that the face covering may be removed when driving alone or when isolated in a closed personal office.
- Encourage the use of a face covering by all customers when conducting business.
- Acknowledge that the face covering must be worn by employees when conducting business at the worksites of other entities when the entity requires one to do so.

Customers should be provided a face covering when they do not have their own. If a customer refuses to wear a face covering, agencies should have a process in place that supports asking the customer to return at another time or a means to determine if assistance can be provided while maintaining physical distancing. Agencies must take all actions practical to provide the needed service using physical distancing practices. Employee and visitor safety should be the first priority in considering how to handle the situation. If physical distancing is not possible, agencies may need to communicate that in-person service will only be provided to individuals wearing a face covering and direct the individual to leave the premises. Agencies should be cautious with this practice and limit to situations that rise to could rise to the level of disorderly conduct.

When using a face covering, employees and customers should be provided with [guidance on how to wear a face covering](#), how to put it on, take it off and proper disposal. Employees should be provided with a minimum of two face coverings to allow time for proper care in accordance with CDC guidance.

Be mindful of contracted services that may be present in agency facilities on a daily or regular basis. Be mindful that contracts may or may not allow for agencies to stipulate a requirement for face coverings. Agencies will need to review and discuss how best to

address individuals that may be present in the workplace such as security, temporary staffing, contracted custodial or food services. Agencies should also be mindful of requirements of other agencies or businesses that share facilities or buildings.

Exceptions for Face Coverings

Agencies should also be prepared to consider alternatives for customers and employees who may have a religious belief or medical condition that prevents them from wearing a face covering. There may be other physical distancing strategies that can be put in place with the customer and the employee. It is recommended that agencies use their existing processes for accommodations to handle any needed exceptions for employees when a face covering is required in the workplace.

If you have an employee work assignment where a face covering may be considered a safety issue, you will need to develop an alternative solution. An employee should not wear a face covering if it impedes their vision or creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task. Individuals who are hearing impaired may also have difficulty communicating and lip reading if face coverings are used. If a face covering cannot be worn, physical distancing shall be maintained using alternative solutions.

It is an agency responsibility to ensure that face coverings do not display images that are inappropriate for the worksite. Agencies have the discretion to require an employee to remove a face covering if you deem it to be inappropriate and direct the employee to use an alternative face covering.

Sourcing Face Coverings

The Virginia Correctional Enterprise (VCE) may be able to provide agencies with non-medical face coverings. Availability will depend on volume needed, timeline of need and demand by external entities. Agencies should also visit the Department of General Services website and review the [Emergency Vendor List](#).

Gloves

Gloves should only be provided to employees who require them to perform certain job functions, such as handling mail, custodial work, certain trades, and groundskeeping. For the vast majority of employees, gloves are not recommended for general protective use for the following reasons:

- Touching your face with contaminated hands, whether gloved or not, poses a significant risk of infection.
- Gloves often create a false sense of security for the individuals wearing them; people are more likely to touch contaminated surfaces because they feel protected from the virus.
- When wearing gloves, people are less inclined to wash their hands, even though handwashing is the number-one defense against any virus.
- Proper removal of gloves takes training. If contaminated gloves are not removed properly, employees are exposed to greater risk.

Employees who use cleaning chemicals are required to use disposable gloves. Other personal protective equipment may also be required by the chemical manufacturer. Check

chemical warning labels and safety data sheets for appropriate personal protective equipment. Disposable gloves are required to be worn when cleaning, including trash removal, after a known or suspected exposure to an individual with COVID-19. These items shall be disposed of immediately after cleaning.

Mail Handling

Employees who handle and process mail should attempt to complete processing activities in well-ventilated areas. They should avoid touching their mouth, eyes, or face when handling mail. If employees choose to wear gloves while handling mail, gloves should be made of breathable material and should be changed when dirty or when perforated. Gloves should be removed when not completing mail processing activities, and frequent handwashing and sanitization is strongly encouraged.

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing is a simple and very effective way to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19. In practice this means:

- Staying six feet away from others as a normal practice.
- Eliminating physical contact with others, such as handshakes or embracing coworkers, visitors, or friends.
- Avoiding touching surfaces that are touched by others as much as possible.
- Avoiding anyone who appears to be sick or is coughing or sneezing.

Locations where physical distancing should be practiced include, but are not limited to, production lines, cafeterias, common areas, entrance/exit areas of work sites, meeting and conference rooms and offices with multiple work stations.

Physical Distancing through Telework

Subject to operational needs and the ability of employees to continue their full job duties, employees may be permitted to continue teleworking to maintain physical distancing. Agencies should evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery during periods of telework and determine if the continuation of teleworking can be supported. Agencies should determine if any additional equipment (headphones, webcams, etc.) may be needed to promote teleworking long term.

The Virginia Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) and the Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA) continues to make available resources and technology that support teleworking across the Commonwealth. Teleworking resources are available on both the DHRM and VITA websites. Be mindful that employees may need office related supplies to successfully telework. Employees may need paper, legal pads, pens, etc. Agencies will need to address how these items will be provided. Agencies should also identify any other materials or equipment that is being used for teleworking to ensure items are returned to the office when it is appropriate to do so.

Be mindful that some employees may be experiencing issues with **child and elder care** resulting from schools and daycare closures. While these issues should ease over time, managers will need to work with the employees to identify strategies for an employee's return into the worksite when required to do so. It is important to remember, the state's Teleworking Policy was changed last year to allow for having a child in the home while an

employee is able to work remotely. In addition, DHRM released a [Child and Elder Care Resource Guide](#) that employees' may find helpful.

Physical Distancing through Alternative Work Schedules and Use of Shifts

Agencies should determine if operations can support the use of alternative work schedules and shifts. Where operationally feasible, worksites should implement staggered shifts to reduce the number of employees coming, going or waiting in work areas at the same time. Alternate work schedules and shifts can also aid in disinfection of the workplace.

Agencies will need to identify schedules, shifts and how best to assign employees to each. Consider staggering schedules or shifts by at least 15 minutes. If employee start and end times are already staggered, you should review to ensure adequate separation exists, with the ultimate goal of avoiding groups of employees waiting in a particular area.

Staggered work schedules can vary by worksite and operational needs. It is recommended that managers speak with employees to determine if there are concerns with personal travel modes such as carpools, mass transit, or other factors that may impact work schedules. While an agency can require and establish work schedules/shifts, to the extent possible, employee factors should be considered in schedule changes and communicated with enough notification to allow for employees to make any adjustments that may be needed.

During start/end of shift, communicate that employees should:

- Avoid gathering when entering and exiting the worksite.
- Remain in their cars until their scheduled window of start time.
- Maintain six feet of space between each person while waiting in line to enter the worksite. Place tape on floors to mark off six feet for employees to stand apart. Be sure to use a material that does not damage the floor or other surfaces.
- Not touch the time clock (if used) or entry door handle with an exposed finger(s) or hand (if possible).
- Not touch their face before they have had a chance to wash their hands.
- Be patient with staff conducting health screening checks. Employees will not be required to submit leave if they are tardy due to screening procedures.
- Remain in their car if there are long lines or inclement weather.
- Wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol upon arrival and prior to departure.

Agencies must also be mindful that some facilities may have normal business hours that are set by others outside of the agency. Discussion and coordinating will be necessary to ensure employees are able to access a building if schedules are adjusted beyond an established building operating schedule. Consideration should also be given to any impact a change in schedule may have on an employee's ability to access a building by use of a state issued badge or I.D.

Physical Distancing Between Floors

Employees who are physically able are encouraged to use the stairwells when transitioning between floors. Promoting this practice should be done in connection with regular cleaning and disinfecting of the handrails, door knobs and other high touch areas.

If elevators are used within a building, it is recommended that no more than three individuals should be in an elevator at one time. This may vary depending on the size of the

elevator and employees should be encouraged to use their discretion to maintain physical distancing. Consideration should be given to posting such guidance outside of all elevators.

When in leased facilities, consider discussing these practices and the display of any guidance posters with the building manager or the Department of General Services (DGS) Division of Real Estate and Facilities Management if in a DGS administered lease.

Physical Distancing in Meetings / Conferences / Special Events

Evaluate all agency meetings, conferences and special events to determine if they can be postponed or handled through a virtual means. Ensure you follow the guidance provided on the most current Executive Order.

Limit in-person meetings whenever possible. If an in-person meeting is deemed absolutely necessary, implement the following protocols:

- In-person meetings will be limited to a designated number of persons even when the meeting area is large enough to accommodate prescribed physical distancing measures; and
- Meeting rooms must accommodate a physical distancing requirement of six feet of separation for everyone in attendance.
- Where needed temporarily remove tables, chairs or other items that limit the ability to ensure proper physical distancing.

Physical Distancing at Workstations

- Whenever possible, workstations should be arranged to allow separation of six feet between stations and consideration should be given to arranging seating so that employees are not directly facing each other. If this condition cannot be met, consider alternative measures to mitigate potential exposure such as the following:
 - Staggered work shifts
 - Face coverings
 - Shields or physical barriers may also be installed where practical and permitted, subject to state building code. Installation of any type of shield or barrier should only be done after review and permitting of the state building official. It is critical that agencies assess all risk and safety hazards that may come from installation of any shield to avoid fire hazards and obstruction of egress. In addition, a plan needs to be in place to ensure any structured installed is properly cleaned and disinfected.
 - Converting large meeting rooms into workstations to increase opportunities for physical distancing
- Employees should be strongly encouraged to clean and disinfect their own workspace multiple times a day, giving special attention to frequently touched surfaces, such as computer keyboards, phones, and desktops. In doing so, the agency will need to ensure that employees have the necessary supplies to clean.
- Employees should be discouraged from using co-workers phones, desks and other office equipment.
- Employees should be reminded to avoid touching their faces and to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water several times during their shift to reduce the risk of potential person-to-person infections.
- Employees at worksites that serve the public should be permitted reasonable time each hour to wash their hands.

Physical Distancing During Restroom Breaks

Establish physical distancing guidelines for restroom breaks to include the following:

- Occupy alternate urinals and restroom stalls to maintain separation of six feet.
- Avoid congregating in the restroom. Emphasize courteous behaviors and a needed awareness of others' need to use the restroom.
- To the extent possible, encourage employees to not touch doorknobs, faucets, paper towel dispensers, etc. with clean, bare hands. Communicate the [CDC guidance on handwashing](#) for proper precautions and hand washing techniques when using the restroom.

Arrange for facilities management to increase the frequency of cleaning of all restroom facilities if possible.

Physical Distancing with Visitors / Lobby Entrances and Waiting Areas

Some worksites or work requirements include interaction with the public in order to perform business functions. If the agency determines that normal business operations for the public will resume, follow these guidelines:

- When able, conduct business by appointment only. If appointments are not feasible, limit building occupancy to 50% of the total occupancy.
- Designate specific times for high-risk and elderly people to obtain services daily or at least once a week.
- Encourage or require all visitors to wear face coverings. See additional guidance under the section Face Coverings.
- At all times, physical distancing of six feet should be maintained by arranging points of service to comply and posting signage to remind employees and visitors of physical distancing requirements.
 - Lobby areas should clearly designate where visitors can sit. If able, remove extra chairs to reinforce the maintenance of six feet. Identify front entrances and/or lobby areas that are small which may require visitors to wait outside. Be prepared to handle how to communicate and manage this including situations of inclement weather.
 - Use floor tape to indicate where visitors can stand for lines. Consider both the inside and outside of the worksite. Be sure to use materials that will not cause damage to the floor or other surfaces.
- In situations where physical distancing cannot be maintained; consider installation of shields or other barriers to help prevent exposure. Some entities are using clear shower curtains on rods for this purpose. Installation of any type of shield should only be done after review and permitting of the state building official. It is critical that agencies assess all risk and safety hazards that may come from installation of any shield to avoid fire hazards and obstruction of egress.
- Consider signage to direct the flow of foot traffic to enhance movement of people and to reduce face to face interaction.
- Determine if security will be needed at the worksite. This may be applicable for public facing services where a large number of customers can be anticipated.

Noncompliance with Personal Safety Guidance

Ensure agency leadership has thought through how to handle a situation where an employee or customer refuses to comply with the established guidelines. Are others readily available if needed such as Human Resources professionals or security? Are front desk employees or receptionists trained to handle confrontations?

It is important that employees understand the need to comply with established guidelines. It is equally important for managers and supervisors to understand that some employees

may be fearful of returning to a worksite and in dealing with the public. A plan should be put in place as to who will work with managers and employees for these situations and what resources will be made available.

Break and Meal Protocols

Physical Distancing During Breaks and Meal Periods

Employee breaks and meal periods should be staggered, when operationally feasible to limit the number of employees in communal spaces at one time.

Agencies should work with managers to develop staggered schedules for meal periods and breaks to accommodate physical distancing. Consideration must be given to employees with medical conditions that require specific break times. In addition to existing break rooms, encourage employees to use alternate sites for breaks which may include their workstation, unoccupied meeting rooms, car, or outside space (if available and weather permitting).

Seating and Capacity

- Make sure employees sit six feet apart during breaks. Consider removing chairs or designating seats that can be used.
- Make sure occupancy limits are not exceeded in communal areas, including around vending and ATM machines.
- Make sure employees begin and end breaks at designated times.

Break Times

- Provide wipes in break rooms and communal areas.
- Encourage employees to wipe tables, seats, all surfaces, refrigerators, vending machines, coffee pots and microwave ovens before and after each use.

Communal Spaces

Employees should avoid direct contact with hard surfaces in communal areas, including refrigerators, microwaves, coffee pots, water coolers/fountains, chairs, tables, etc. Employees should be encouraged to use paper towels to touch any surface and use wipes to disinfect before and after every use. Ensure these items are readily available daily.

Communal spaces should be cleaned throughout the day. Consider having employees sign up to wipe down the spaces they use much like what a team may do for a commonly used refrigerator or other appliances in the office.

Determine if shared utensils, condiments and other like items need to be temporarily removed from shared spaces.

Cleaning Personal Workspace

Encourage employees to regularly clean frequently touched areas in their personal workspaces—including table, desktop, light switch, phone, keyboard and mouse. Communicate the supplies that you will make available and proper use of each.

The CDC recommends [cleaning appropriate surfaces](#) with soap and water, if dirty, followed by a disinfectant. This [CDC graphic](#) will assist supervisors develop, implement and maintain a cleaning plan. Many products recommend keeping the surface wet for a period of time or wearing gloves when using, so it is important to follow the instructions on the product label.

Specifically, for electronics, remove visible contamination if present. If manufacturer guidance for cleaning is unavailable, consider cleaning these surfaces with alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70 percent alcohol. Dry surfaces thoroughly to avoid pooling of liquids. Sprays should be applied to paper towel prior to disinfecting electronics.

Worksite Visitors and Screening Guidance

Agencies will need to determine if a travel and health screening questionnaire will be used. Guidance for both may be found in this [Policy Addendum](#). This guidance will need to be adjusted if an agency determines a need to conduct any type of screening on individuals other than employees.

Worksite Signage

To help maintain employee mindfulness about proper COVID-19 safety precautions, agencies should post signs in readily visible locations. At a minimum, consider the signs noted below. Signs are available on the CDC website in multiple languages.

[Stop the Spread of Germs](#)

[COVID-19 Symptoms](#)

[Wash Your Hands](#)

Worksite Exposure Protocols

Be mindful that a building may be required to be closed for disinfection without notice. Agencies should remain prepared to operate in accordance with their Continuity of Operations Plans. In DGS owned and leased facilities, DGS will coordinate all needed cleaning. In addition, DGS Division of Purchases and Supply has established statewide contracts for building disinfectant services in agency owned and administrated lease facilities.

Notification templates are provided on DHRM's COVID-19 [DHRM's COVID-19 webpage](#).

HR Policies

Furloughs or Layoffs

If there are any agency employees in a furlough or layoff status, work with Human Resources on recall procedures if appropriate.

Leave

Reinforce and communicate expectations for employees as they relate to staying home if sick and following CDC guidance on [What To Do If You Are Sick](#). Determine if additional communication is needed as to the various types of leave available to employees. See the [DHRM COVID-19](#) web site for guidance on leave types available.

Consider any internal communications that may be needed to promote the use of leave to allow employees time to recharge. Look at agency practices for allowing leave carry over for unused leave at leave year end. Agency heads have the designated authority to approve leave carry over when there are circumstances for which earned leave could not be taken in a leave year.

Retaliation

Agencies should be mindful that employees have a right to express a concern for real or perceived safety hazards. Consider how, and establish a process by which, employees can raise any concerns in a manner that will ensure no retaliation for doing so.

Travel Guidance

[Refer to the CDC's website for a full list of travel precautions](#). State employees must follow the travel guidance established in the most current Executive Order.

Traveling by Vehicle

If travel is required for work, ensure that employees ride alone in vehicles where operationally feasible. Employees who normally have multiple employees in the vehicle due to safety or work standards should follow agency-specific protocols when traveling in vehicles.

If the driver is alone throughout the trip, a face covering is not necessary. If more than one person is in the vehicle, all occupants should wear face coverings. An employee does not need to wear a face covering if it impedes their vision, if they have a medical condition, or if it would create an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task.

It is recommended that employees limit stops when traveling between their home and their worksite. Upon arrival at the worksite and prior to departing, employees should wash their hands as recommended.

Traveling to Multiple Worksites

Employees who travel to multiple worksites or agencies should be reminded that they must follow the safety guidelines established for the specific worksite and agency.

Traveling on Mass Transit

Employees who commute or use transit for business purposes should be encouraged to wear face coverings unless there is a medical reason that prevents them from wearing a face covering. Also encourage employees to wash their hands upon entry into the workplace. Employees should be encouraged to stay home and not use transit services if they suspect they are sick or if they have any COVID-19 symptoms.

Cleaning Work Vehicles

State owned vehicles should be cleaned in accordance with the DGS Office of Fleet Management Services guidelines. DGS has shared information with agency fleet points of contact.

Commonwealth employees who require the use of a rental car through the state's contracted provider, Enterprise. Enterprise has identified safety procedures on their website.

Communications

Once you have worked through your decisions and have a plan in place, give consideration to the communications you need to implement. Who needs to know what and when? Keep in mind that your audience may need different information at different times and through different communication tools. Consider what you need to share, when and how with the following:

- Governor and Cabinet
- General public
- Agency employees
- Stakeholder groups

While employees will need clear direction on schedules and other expectations, you should also communicate your plans for safety and cleanliness within the worksite. Promoting both the agency actions to be taken and the expectations you have for the employee will be important in establishing a level of comfort for employees reporting back to the worksite.

Long Term Planning

Facility Needs and Improvements

As facility improvements are requested and/or made, consider the following to ensure long-term sustainability:

- Use of smart building technologies

- Upgrades to ventilation systems
- Voice activated doors, lights, push buttons
- Touchless faucets
- Ultraviolet lightening
- Redesign of open floor plans
- Be mindful that use of smart technologies brings with it an increased need to plan for, monitor and manage cyber threats and risks.
- Consider how you will manage needed real estate and workspaces. With automated work processes and work flexibilities, are you able to reduce unneeded office space in the future?

COOP and Strategic Planning

Don't lose sight of the lessons learned during this pandemic. Designate an individual or team to gather lessons learned and incorporate any changes needed into your agency Continuity of Operation Plan (COOP). In addition, take time to capture which work processes were not automated and unable to be provided virtually. Use this information as part of your strategic planning process and as you formulate new technology and budget requests in future years. As you develop new policy and procedures, do so with a health focus.

Resources

[Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[Commonwealth of Virginia COVID-19](#)

[Virginia Department of Health](#)

[Virginia Department of Emergency Management](#)