A New Kind of

LUCAS COUNTY WORKPLACE GUIDANCE

A Guide for Preparing to Return to Work

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Introduction

COVID-19 has disrupted life as we know it for the past several months. The Ohio Department of Health Director Dr. Amy Acton's stay-at-home order has slowed the spread of COVID-19. Now, we need to work together to continue this trend as we move forward. As Ohio begins to reopen, we must take care to keep ourselves, our employees, and our workplaces safe in order to slow the spread of infection within our community. This guidance provides some basic information on best practices to prevent a resurgence of COVID-19 as we all establish our new normal.

This document is designed to accompany the Lucas County Return to Work survey. Each section within this document correlates to a series of questions within the survey. For your convenience, questions associated with each section are identified in this document.

COVID Information

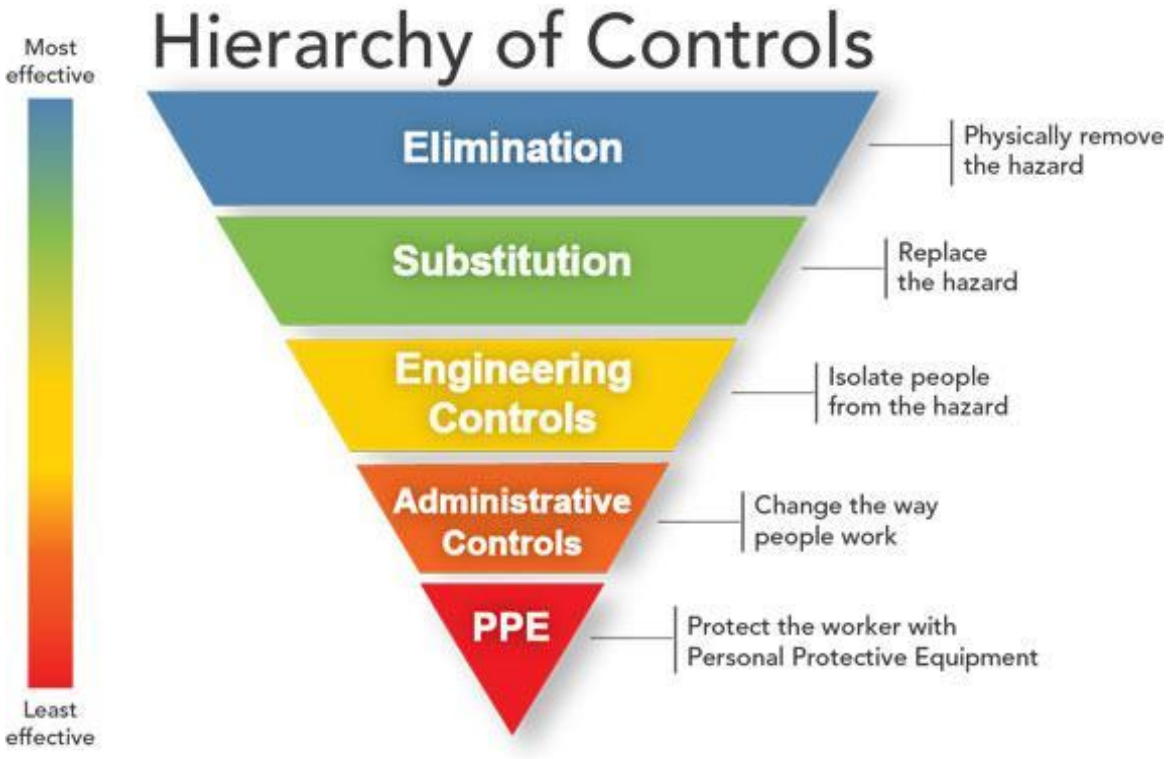
COVID-19 is a disease that results from a virus, which is spread through respiratory droplets from person to person. Highly contagious, coronavirus can be transmitted by people who are not experiencing symptoms. The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 to be a global pandemic as cases have been found in nearly every country in the world. Symptoms may include fever, a dry cough, difficulty breathing, chills, loss of sense of taste or smell, or a sore throat. COVID-19 can have a wide range of severity and has the possibility of being fatal if contracted.

Workplace Modifications

The workplace can be made safer in a number of ways for employees and visitors as everyone moves forward in our new version of normal. The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) provides a framework for us to think about the different changes that can be made to all aspects of work life.

Hierarchy of Control

NIOSH has produced a graphic to explain the types of measures that can be implemented to keep employees and the public safe from hazards. The most effective control measures are at top of the graphic with the least effective at the bottom.



Elimination

The most effective measure to reduce a hazard is to remove it entirely from the workplace. This can be done by changing how you provide certain services or temporarily suspending parts of your normal services. It may require major changes in business models, procedures, or equipment to eliminate a hazard.

Examples include replacing initial in-person client meetings with video conferencing or purchasing equipment to allow some employees to work permanently from home.

Substitution

At times, it is possible to exchange one business process for another to reach the same goal. This can be done by leveraging technology and creative problem solving to minimize the disruption to employees and visitors alike.

Examples include offering services digitally rather than in-person only, using cell phones instead of desk phones and having employees work virtually as opposed to in the office.

Engineering Controls

This involves making changes to the work environment to prevent the hazard from impacting employees. This could involve reconfiguring work spaces, installing barriers, or modifying HVAC systems.

Examples include putting up clear plastic barriers between stationary staff and visitors, marking floors so visitors to ensure 6 feet of separation, or closing off areas where people tend to congregate.

Administrative Controls

At the administrative level, policy changes can be made to help manage the spread of COVID-19. Policies should focus on making sure that people who are sick have adequate time off to recover, ensuring they do not come to work while sick and limiting the in-person contact employees have with each other and visitors.

Examples include allowing employees to work remotely on a regular basis, changing schedules to four 10-hour shifts or otherwise modifying

shift and break times, and implementing a screening policy to make sure employees are not sick before they come into work.

PPE

Because not all hazards can be controlled, sometimes the only option is to use protective equipment to lower the risk of the employees being impacted by the hazard. This is the least effective measure as personal protective equipment (PPE) may not always be utilized effectively by employees, if at all.

If PPE is utilized, employees must be trained on the safe use of PPE, and spot checks must be conducted to make sure PPE is being worn throughout the work day.

Risk Assessment

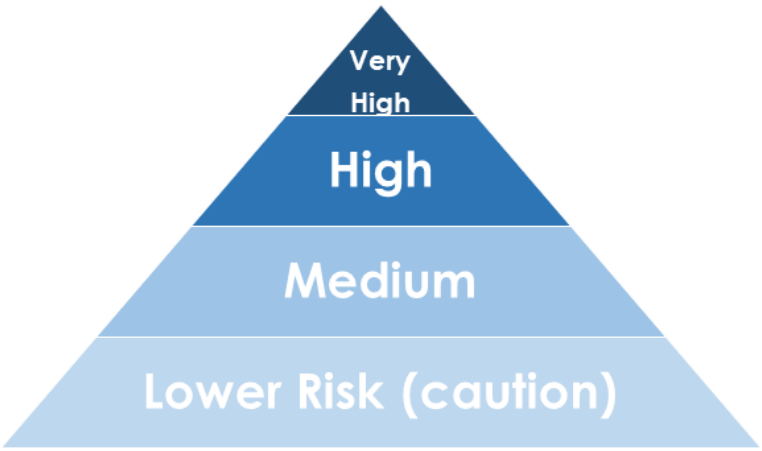
This correlates with questions 1-3 in the survey.

OSHA created a four-level classification of risk to help explain which mitigation strategy is the best fit for each group, including who should use which type of PPE, based on what type of tasks they perform at work.

PPE can look different depending on each work environment. Some types of PPE, such as N-95 masks, should be reserved for medical workers, first responders, and industries legally required to use those items.

In order to be effective, PPE has to fit correctly and be worn consistently for the entire workday. Face coverings, including masks, must cover the nose and mouth. FEMA provided PPE guidance that can be found here.

As per Lucas County policy, all employees or visitors to Lucas County buildings are required to wear face coverings in public areas of Lucas County facilities. Face coverings are available commercially. People who wish to make their own masks can do so by following the instructions from the CDC on how to make several types of masks, as well as how to fit and clean homemade masks.



Very High Exposure Risk

This category is only for employees who are either providing healthcare or mortuary care to people who are either known or suspected to have COVID-19 in a manner that is likely to produce aerosolized spray.

Employees within the very high exposure risk category would need to wear gloves, gowns, face shields, and either a face mask or a respirator.

High Exposure Risk

This category is only for employees who are either providing healthcare or mortuary care to people who are either known or suspected to have COVID-19 in a manner that is unlikely to produce aerosolized spray.

Employees within the high exposure risk category would likely need to wear gloves, gowns, face shields, and either a face mask or a respirator.

Medium Exposure Risk

This category is for employees who work in an environment that requires them to have frequent and/or close contact (within 6 feet of) people who have the potential to be infected with COVID-19, but are not known or suspected COVID-19 patients. In Lucas County, any employee who physically works with the public would likely fall into this category.

Employees within the medium exposure risk category need to assess PPE needs based on the tasks being completed. Lucas County policy requires that all employees wear face coverings and that members of

the public interacting with Lucas County employees wear face coverings.

Lower Exposure Risk

This category is for employees who do not physically work with the public and have little physical contact with coworkers.

Workers should wear whatever PPE they would normally wear for work. OSHA does not recommend any additional PPE for employees in this exposure risk group.

Facility Modifications

This correlates with questions 4-9 in the survey.

Changing the workplace to limit in-person contact can be difficult. Work spaces may have to be rearranged to keep people at least 6 feet apart. This might include shutting down or limiting access to common spaces such as waiting areas, staff break rooms, or kitchen facilities; placing clear plastic barriers between employee workspaces or employees and the public; or clearly marking spaces 6 feet or more apart for people to use as a guide when waiting in line.

Facility modifications also can include moving desks or reassigning workspaces to put more distance between employees. If workspaces can not be moved and a barrier must be placed, it should be made of sturdy, clear plastic. The barrier must be high enough to ensure that it is effective if someone is standing and speaking rather than simply sitting down to talk.

An easy modification is to place automatic hand sanitizer dispensers near high-touch locations such as doors. If safety permits, doors can also be propped open to prevent the need to touch them. Another easy modification is to clean workspaces more frequently, with employees cleaning their areas daily and to have the organization arrange for deeper cleanings on a regular basis.

Employee Modifications

This correlates with questions 10-12 in the survey and includes information from the Screening Protocols section below.

The best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is to continue to encourage social distancing among both the public and our workforce. All employees who can work from home **should continue doing so** for the foreseeable future. If an employee can't work from home, there are ways to decrease crowding at the workplace, including modifying traditional work hours, and staggering breaks to limit the congregation of employees.

For organizations that operate in shifts, a best practice is to assign a group of people to the same dedicated shift. This can also be done with workers who only need to report to the workplace occasionally - Group A can be assigned to work from the office two days a week and Group B can work from the office two other days. This reduces commingling and decreases the potential to spread infection.

Screening Protocols

Employee screening is an easy way to check on employee health before the start of the work day. There are two parts to conducting employee screening: self-reporting and temperature checks.

Self-reporting

Self-reporting involves asking your employees to answer questions every day before reporting to work. You can set up an online form or have employees call and check in before each shift. This is **required** in the state of Ohio as per Dr. Acton's Stay Safe Ohio order. Suggested questions include:

1. Do you have at least **one** of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fever **OR** at least two of the following symptoms: chills, muscle aches, headaches, sore throat or new loss of taste or smell?
2. Do you live with anyone who has the symptoms listed in question one and who cannot be isolated from you in your home? (e.g. someone who does not have their own bedroom with a door and a dedicated bathroom)
3. Have you had close contact in the last 14 days with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19?

If an employee answers **yes** to any of those questions, even if they do not have symptoms, they should self-quarantine for 14 days. If they start to show symptoms while in self-quarantine, they should follow the instructions under the *Temperature Checks* section, and get tested for COVID-19.

Temperature Checks

Taking employees' temperatures before every shift prior entering the workplace by using a temporal thermometer is **strongly recommended** in Dr. Acton's Stay Safe Ohio order. If your workplace can't find a temporal thermometer, employees can take their temperature at home and report it prior to coming into work.

If an employee has a temperature of more than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius, they should self-quarantine at home.

Positive Cases

If your workplace has an employee who is either symptomatic or tests positive for COVID-19, they should not be allowed to return to work in person even if they only have mild symptoms. If they have symptoms, employees should self-isolate until at least 10 days from when symptoms started **AND** they have had 72 hours without a fever (**without** using fever reducing medicines). If they still have symptoms after 7 days, they should remain at home until symptoms have resolved **and** they have been fever free for 72 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.

Employees who live with someone that has a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 should self-isolate for 14 days from the date of last known contact with the person who has a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

For more information about managing COVID exposures within your workplace, please contact the Toledo Lucas County Health Department or review their Open for Business guidance. Contact tracing information for organizations can be found here, and a graphic version can be found here.

The CDC has provided a guide on managing COVID-19 at home that employees might find helpful.

Remote Work while Symptomatic

Continuing to work remotely while sick is fine, if the employee feels well enough to do so. If necessary, items required for remote work should be picked up by a family member or dropped off outside of the person's door to limit in person contact.

Interactions with the Public

This correlates with questions 13-20 in the survey. Please note that if you answer "no" to number 13, you will be transferred to number 20.

Interacting with the public can increase potential exposure to COVID-19 and should be replaced with virtual interactions as much as possible. When interactions are unavoidable, the location of these interactions can make a big difference in what mitigation strategies can be used.

If employees are interacting with the public in a fixed location, such as a government building or office, facility modifications as discussed in the *Facility Modifications* section can be used to lower the risk in that environment.

If employees are interacting with the public either in client homes or public spaces, care should be taken to maintain a 6 foot distance as much as possible. In circumstances where that is not possible, employees should wear proper PPE, use correct PPE removal processes, and wash their hands with soap and water as soon as possible after the encounter. If soap and water is not available, hand sanitizer should be used.

When members of the public come into your organization, you need to determine what, if any, measures your organization would like to take to prevent the spread of infection. These measures can include requiring face coverings, as Lucas County is doing, or conducting temperature checks on all visitors.

Service Delivery Changes

This correlates with questions 21-22 in the survey.

In order to continue to serve the public while minimizing risk to employees, organizations should take a close look at how they can provide necessary services while decreasing in-person interactions.

This can be achieved by providing services online, by phone, or by video chat. For services that require an in-person component, there are a number of ways to decrease the amount of time people need to spend physically present to conduct their business. These include moving to digitizing forms which then can be posted online to be completed in advance and either emailed or printed and mailed or taken with them to an appointment. Digital forms also can be loaded onto tablets and provided to people after they arrived in person. The tablet can then be wiped clean between uses.

Whenever possible, try to schedule visitors to reduce wait times and congregation in public spaces. Seniors or people who have small children likely will appreciate this service and it will assist with limiting facilities to the 50 percent building occupation of the fire code maximum as recommended by Governor DeWine.

Business Structure Changes

This correlates with questions 23-26 in the survey.

Adjustments may be needed to how daily business is conducted going forward as employees work in new ways, including working from home or alternative schedules.

It is key to ensure that employees have the same access to information, technical support, and coworkers that they normally would have if they were physically at work. An easy step to achieve this is to virtualize or eliminate in-person meetings as much as possible. Instead of in-person meetings, provide call-in or video conferencing options.

Another measure is to consider using regular check-ins between employees and managers to talk about how working virtually is going or their concerns about working in-person. Some teams also may benefit from using online project management software to stay in touch about key projects.

Work from Home

Encouraging employees to work from home can be a difficult transition, but it is the **best option** when it comes to keeping everyone safe. These steps can ease this transition:

1. Make sure that every employee working from home has a work laptop and adequate internet service at home. If internet access is a challenge, consider investing in a hotspot or enabling a cell phone to become a hotspot.
2. Give everyone an updated list of phone numbers for your organization. People may have a phone list pinned to their desk at work, but those numbers might not work if people are going virtual.
3. Forward desk phones to cell phones. This will work best if people have work-issued cell phones.
4. Consider asking employees to load their work email accounts to cell phones.
5. Make it clear that employees should only be expected to work during their designated work hours.

Sick Time

Providing the appropriate sick time so that employees feel at ease staying home if they are sick or if they have to care for a sick family member is one of the best ways to keep a workplace free from COVID-19. If an employee has to choose between keeping his or her job and admitting they are not feeling well they may not admit to being sick.

Please view the Lucas County COVID-19 sick time policy as well as the Lucas County FMLA policy as a reference for your organization policy.

Reopening Needs

This correlates with questions 27-30 in the survey.

Reopening an organization can be complex, and is not something to be conducted without sufficient planning. In order to reopen, it is recommended that departments submit the Lucas County Return to Work survey and receive feedback from the Lucas County Return to Work Committee. Organizations also should consider how they will communicate with employees about reopening and future COVID-19 cases that may impact the

organization. Consideration should also be given to how they will communicate with the public about any changes to services being provided.

Building Preparation Plan (BPP)

A comprehensive plan that incorporates effective tactics, techniques and procedures to be implemented to prepare a facility for the return of employees to their physical workspaces. This plan must cover all recommended public health requirements regarding the facility and its preparedness to support day-to-day facility operations in the COVID 19 environment. Several key components of this plan will deal with the development of installation and workspace cleaning plans, installation pre-return inspections along with Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning, (HVAC) and facility mechanicals systems checks. A BPP is not a one-size-fits-all document and each facility must look at its particular circumstances and take appropriate steps to follow recommended public health requirements.

Building Access Control Plan (BACP)

A comprehensive plan that identifies all of the measures and procedures that have been implemented at a facility to control building access to prepare a facility for the return of employees to their physical workspaces. This plan must cover all recommended public health requirements regarding the facility and its preparedness to support day-to-day facility operations in the COVID 19 environment. Key components of this plan will address issues with building reception, visitor policies, shipping and receiving, elevator use and safety and health checks. A BACP is not a one-size-fits-all document and each facility must look at its particular circumstances and take appropriate steps to follow recommended public health requirements.

Social Distancing Plan (SDP)

A comprehensive plan that identifies all of the measures and procedures that have been implemented to increase the physical space between individuals at a worksite to avoid spreading illness. This plan must cover all recommended public health requirements regarding the facility and its

preparedness to support day-to-day facility operations in the COVID 19 environment. Key components of this plan will address decreasing density, schedule management and office traffic flow patterns. A SDP is not a one-size-fits-all document and each facility must look at its particular circumstances and take appropriate steps to follow recommended public health requirements.

Touch Points Reduction Plan (TPRP)

A comprehensive plan that identifies all of the measures and procedures that have been implemented to reduce the amount of physical contact that individuals must have to operate in a facility to help avoid spreading illness. This plan must cover all recommended public health requirements regarding the facility and its preparedness to support day-to-day facility operations in the COVID 19 environment. Key components of this plan will address open doors, clean desk policies, feeding / food plans and cleaning common areas in the facility. A TPRP is not a one-size-fits-all document and each facility must look at its particular circumstances and take appropriate steps to follow recommended public health requirements.

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Resources section

OSHA guidance
FEMA PPE
CDC Business Guidance
Responsible Restart Ohio
Toledo-Lucas County Health Department
Ohio Department of Health COVID-19 Dashboard
CDC Symptom Self-Check