

New Public Health Requirements Including Masks Imposed on Essential Employers

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Pennsylvania Secretary of Health Rachel Levine has signed an order directing all businesses that remain open to [take additional precautions in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak.](#)

Among other precautions, all employers remaining open must:

- Provide masks to employees and mandate that they wear them, other than during break time for purposes of eating or drinking. Employers may also approve employee-made masks.
- Maintain and enforce social distancing of at least six feet between employees.
- Stagger work start and stop times, as well as break times, to limit large gatherings of groups entering or leaving the facility or in break rooms.
- Limit in-person meetings to no more than 10 people, maintaining a distance of six feet between them, and where possible, conduct all meetings and trainings virtually.
- Prohibit non-essential visitors from entering.
- Provide employees access to regular handwashing with soap, hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes.
- Clean and disinfect high touch areas routinely in accordance with CDC guidelines.
- Maintain adequate staff to control access, maintain order, and enforce social distancing.
- Where feasible, conduct business with the public by appointment only.
- If the employer is operating a business open to the public, require all customers to wear masks while on premises and deny entry to individuals not wearing masks, unless the business is providing medication, medical supplies or food. In those cases, the business must provide alternative methods of pick-up or delivery. Individuals unable to wear a mask due to a medical condition, as well as all children under 2, are exempt from this requirement.
- Communicate all required procedures to employees in English and their native language.

The order also establishes protocols for businesses in the event the business has been exposed to a person with a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19:

Close off areas visited by that individual and use ventilation fans to increase circulation, waiting at least 24 hours or as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection.

- Identify and notify employees that were within six feet of the affected individual for 10 minutes or longer, from the period 48 hours before symptom onset until the time when the individual isolated. For all such employees, adhere to CDC guidelines and, if an employee becomes sick, send the employee home immediately, clean and disinfect all surfaces and notify all other employees with whom the sick employee came into contact.
- Implement temperature screening and send employees home that have elevated temperatures of 100.4 degrees or higher.
- Employers are also encouraged to implement liberal paid time off for employees who stay home with symptoms of COVID-19.

The order will take effect at 8 p.m. Sunday. It will be enforced by a number of state agencies and local law enforcement.

If you have any questions on the secretary's order, please [contact me](#), any member of the [Barley Snyder COVID-19 Response](#) team, [Employment Practice Group](#) or [Business Practice Group](#).

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