



CITY OF BOSTON
Office of the Mayor
Martin J. Walsh

MAYOR WALSH SHARES RETURN TO WORK FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE BUSINESSES, EMPLOYERS AND LANDLORDS

Framework adopts best public health practices for keeping workplace and workforce safe

BOSTON - Thursday, May 28, 2020 - Building on his commitment to a safe, phased-in reopening in the City of Boston, Mayor Martin J. Walsh today laid out [guidance and operational recommendations](#) for businesses, employers and commercial landlords to consider as part of their return-to-work strategies for office workplaces. This framework, which focuses on areas such as social distancing, hygiene protocols, staffing and operations, and cleaning and disinfecting, is specific to Phase 1 of the Commonwealth's phased reopening plan, and builds on the industry specific statewide workplace safety standards, incorporating further guidance from the CDC, US Chamber of Commerce and industry associations aimed at preparing the physical workplace and workforce ahead of June 1.

"Our first and foremost priority in making available these guidelines is to empower businesses and employers to act now and put in place safety precautions and protocols before beginning to reopen," said Mayor Walsh. "In the City of Boston, we recognize the size of our commercial sector and the unique role we play in the region's working and commuting patterns. That's why it's so important that as a city, we collectively do everything we can now to institute the necessary safeguards that will allow businesses to reopen in a safe and healthy way when they are ready to do so."

The guidance the City is putting forward today offers additional considerations for employers to ensure a safe reopening, and supplements state and federal mandates around building and property management. More information on this guidance can be [found here](#). All employers are required to follow statewide standards for re-opening office workplaces, including the requirement that businesses and other organizations must limit occupancy within their office space to no more than 25 percent of the maximum occupancy level during Phase 1.

In addition to state and federal mandates, the City of Boston is recommending for businesses, employers and landlords to consider the following recommendations:

Social Distancing:

- *Entrances, Lobbies and Reception:* post clear signage and markers of 6-foot social distancing spaces in all high traffic areas, particularly where lines form; limit entry and access points unless required for compliance with building safety regulations; limit public interactions and public access to buildings by closing lobby seating or other public gathering spaces; deploy sanitizing stations at high traffic areas; discourage use of revolving doors in favor of swing doors where possible; enable no-touch employee security access points; encourage use of door-stoppers where possible to minimize contact with doorknobs
- *Elevators, Stairwells, Hallways, Corridors:* no more than four people in an elevator at a time, and all must wear face coverings, except when unsafe due to medical condition or disability; when possible, building occupants who are able to should be instructed to use the stairs in common directions, and stairs should be limited to one direction; regular sanitation of handrails, buttons, and door handles
- *Cafeterias:* implement one-way directional traffic flows and 6-foot social distancing standards for queuing at checkout and cash registers; install touchless payment options where possible and sanitize point of sale terminals after customer use; supply individually wrapped single-use disposable utensils and products; eliminate self-serve fountain machines and coffee stations; regularly sanitize high-touch areas such as napkin dispensers; install safety barriers to protect food-service workers at points of contact such as cashier stands and checkout lines.

Hygiene Protocols:

- Maintain an adequate supply chain to ensure continuity of vital COVID-19 related supplies and identify backup suppliers ([please see resource page on sourcing PPE](#))
- Avoid sharing office equipment or disinfect between use, including but not limited to telephones, computers, copy machines, water coolers, etc.
- Where possible, open windows for better ventilation
- Follow CDC specific recommendations regarding Building Engineering Controls', [as noted here](#) in the section titled "Maintain a healthy work environment"

Staffing and Operations:

- *Policies and Documentation:* identify and clearly communicate a workplace coordinator who will be responsible for COVID-19 issues and impact on the workplace; conduct a hazard assessment to determine if workplace hazards are present and determine what types of mitigants are necessary to specific job duties; provide personal protective equipment for any employee whose job

function requires it; implement and maintain symptom screening procedure at entrances; establish accommodation and leave policies for employees consistent with federal and state laws

- *Ongoing Operations:* ensure employees and visitors to the building use face coverings, except when unsafe due to medical condition or disability; employers should make face coverings available for their employees (reusable, cloth face covering when possible); encourage flexible meeting options to reduce non-essential travel; monitor and prepare for spikes in sick or absent employees by cross-training employees to maintain critical business processes
- *Communication:* communicate workplace policies clearly, frequently, in multiple languages, and through various channels; utilize an emergency notification system when necessary; and maintain updated contact information for employees
- *Commuting:* when possible, allow for flexibility in working hours so employees can commute during non-peak hours; encourage employees to wash their hands upon entering the workplace

Cleaning and Disinfecting:

- Schedule frequent cleaning of public spaces, high touch surfaces and communal areas
- Have a written cleaning plan available to all staff for review that includes specific COVID-19 considerations, including: frequency of restocking of hygiene supplies, cleaning schedule of general areas, floors and high touch surfaces, and a response action protocol for any known space where a confirmed case of infection of exposure might have occurred, and notification to the workplace coordinator

As part of the City of Boston's response to meet the needs of businesses in Boston as we begin a phased-in reopening, earlier this week, Mayor Walsh announced \$6 million in new debt-free grants to support the safe and healthy reopening of small businesses in Boston. The funding will help qualified small businesses implement the necessary public health measures required to reopen safely. Applications for those grants will be made available today at 5:00 p.m. at boston.gov/reopen-fund. In total, the City of Boston has provided over \$13.5 million in City, federal and private funding to support small businesses impacted by COVID-19.

For more information on the phased-in reopening in the City of Boston, please visit: boston.gov/reopening.

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