



GENESEE AND ORLEANS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENTS



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RE-OPENING GUIDANCE AND FACT SHEET IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

As New York State prepares to “un-PAUSE” on a regional basis and in a phased way, Governor Cuomo has outlined a 12-step plan to guide this process. Given these plans, temporarily closed or remote businesses and organizations should begin to consider the conditions that may allow them to individually reopen, and support our region to stay open. The success of Genesee and Orleans counties to open and stay open will depend on how well we can collectively respond to the challenges addressed by the 12-step plan. The Genesee & Orleans County Health Departments (GO Health) wish to support this process by providing information, interpretation of State guidance, and recommendations to help local businesses and organizations develop their own safety and infection-reduction plans. **Please be aware that this situation is quickly changing, and further guidelines should be expected.**

Full description of the NYS Regional Requirements for Phased Reopening can be found here:

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/new-york-forward/phased-plan-re-open-new-york#individual-region-plans>
<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/amid-ongoing-covid-19-pandemic-governor-cuomo-outlines-additional-guidelines-when-regions-can>

The first 3 requirements of the 12-step plan can be summarized as follows:

1. *A 14-day decline in a regional hospitalization rate*
2. *Phased opening for business: i) construction and manufacturing with low risk, ii) additional industries based on both priority and risk level*
3. ***Each business and industry must have a plan to protect employees and consumers, make the physical work space safer and implement processes that lower risk of infection in the business.***

Given the requirement of developing a plan for greater safety and lowering risk of workplace infection for both employees and consumers, similar guidelines should be implemented as those that have allowed essential services to keep functioning during this time. Point #5 of the 10-point policy of the NYS PAUSE Executive Order (found online at: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/new-york-state-pause>) states:

Businesses and entities that provide other essential services must implement rules that help facilitate social distancing of at least six feet

The rules and policies made to facilitate social distancing of at least six feet could include:

- Designate **set spaces for persons in lines or queues** for services, with a clear 6ft marking system.
- Ensure that consumers **remain at least 6ft** from cashiers or other regularly stationed employees. This can be done by adding a physical spacer in cases where a normal countertop might be less than this distance.
- Provide **traffic flow guidelines** in any area that may be prone to public crowding or congestion.
- Provide clear signs requiring consumers to **wear masks** upon entering business premises, and to maintain social distancing practice while inside business premises.
- Since public masks are currently required when there is high likelihood for 6ft social distancing to be not maintained, it should be assumed that requiring consumers to wear mask in order to enter business premises is a responsible thing to do. **Employees interacting with the public or interacting at a space of less than 6ft** are also be required to wear cloth or other suitable masks.

Additional rules or policies to reduce potential of COVID-19 spread in the workplace and to protect both employees and consumers could include:

- Ensure a **regular sanitation routine** of potentially shared surfaces, giving highest priority to 1) all publicly used door handles, 2) publically accessed payment screens, 3) other commonly used surface areas such as countertops, and 4) all other areas deemed to be appropriate or of concern to control the potential spread of COVID-19. CDC and NYS guidelines for disinfecting can be seen here:
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
 - https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/03/cleaning_guidance_general_building.pdf
- Consider transparent **barriers** such as plexiglass to separate consumers from cashiers or other employees if 6ft separation is not easily supported by other methods. Barriers can also be used to reduce use of shared services such as countertops so as to reduce the burden of regular sanitation between customers.
- If it helps the flow of business or reduces interactions at a workplace, **greeters** can be used as needed.
- Provide **clear signs** asking consumers not to enter business premises if they are currently sick with any symptoms consist with COVID-19. A full list of symptoms supported by the CDC can be seen here:
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
- In addition to not welcoming sick consumers, **symptoms for employees should monitored**. Employees should be encouraged to take temperatures at home before arriving to work, and to not enter the workplace in instances of a fever of 100.4 F or above. Thermometers should be made available at the workplace to help monitor any employee appearing to develop any known COVID-19 symptoms.
- Rather than returning all employees and business functions at once, **a phased return of services** based on higher priority and lower employee/customer risk is highly encouraged.
- For any businesses concerned with safety or theft associated with consumer use of facemasks, it is **possible to make requests** to not wear any hats, non-prescription sunglasses, or other non-religious head or face coverings when entering business premises, as long as these requests are non-discriminatory. Exemptions due to medical prescription or religious practice can require validation from either a medical or religious authority when deemed appropriate.
- Encourage both employees and consumers to be **courteous and vigilant in general hygiene practices** that could impact the spread of COVID-19. Spread can occur even when no symptoms exist, and an infected person is not even aware of their own infection.

A TAKE-AWAY SUMMARY:

Please work within your organization to develop *a plan to protect employees and consumers, make the physical workspace safer and implement processes that lower risk of infection.*

If there are any additional questions beyond what is available in the guidance and informational links provided in this document, you may contact us for support in the development of your individual safety and infection-reduction plan at either:

(585) 344-2580 x5555 / Health@co.genesee.ny.us for Genesee County
585-589-3278 / OCPublicHealth@orleanscountyny.gov for Orleans County

The ability of our region to open and stay open depends on this planning. We are all in this together.

Sincerely,



Paul A. Pettit,
Public Health Director
Genesee & Orleans County

5/5/20

Date