Guidance for businesses, nonprofits and community organizations to prevent the spread of COVID-19 during the reopening process.
New Hanover County
(Re)Open for Business
Guidance for businesses, nonprofits and community organizations to prevent the spread of COVID-19 during the reopening process.

Introduction
Our community is beginning to re-open after effective mitigation measures were implemented to keep New Hanover County ahead of the curve of COVID-19. Many businesses have closed, or altered business operations to continue in limited capacity. As re-opening begins, it’s important to continue factoring COVID-19 into all aspects of your business operation and continue protective measures to prevent any additional spread of COVID-19.

In this guide you will find best practices to keep your business and workplace strong in the fight against COVID-19. New Hanover County Public Health is making available Environmental Health Specialists and Communicable Disease Nurses to guide and support your team through re-opening. This interdisciplinary team can provide consultation and support to you and your establishment either by phone or in-person. Ask questions, discuss best practices and cleanliness to prevent COVID-19 and request technical assistance or an in-person consultation by calling the New Hanover County Coronavirus Call Center at 910-798-6800.

Disclaimer:
This document is meant to provide guidance and support for businesses, nonprofits and other organizations as they begin re-opening, and may not include all information necessary for all work environments, nor does it supersede or replace regulatory requirements for permitted and/or licensed facilities. Licensed establishments should consult with their regulatory agency before returning to full operations. All organizations are welcome to call New Hanover County Public Health at 910-798-6800 for assistance and consultation regarding re-opening and proper prevention and infection control measures.
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Section 1. Maintain a Healthy Environment

1. Practice physical distancing
   a. Institute measures to physically separate and increase distance between employees, other coworkers, and customers at least six feet apart at all times:

   i. Limit the number of customers in the establishment at one time to ensure physical distancing.
      1. The Governor’s phased re-opening plan limits capacity in some establishments. (For example, for retail businesses the capacity is 50% of the posted capacity by the fire marshal). Make sure physical distancing of six feet can be maintained between people in the establishment.
      2. Businesses can calculate a reduced maximum occupancy using tax listings or your building’s stated fire capacity deemed by the fire marshal. Search your real estate record at Tax.NHCgov.com where you can find building square footage under property records.

   ii. Arrange furniture so there is at least six feet between employees as well as between employees and customers.

   iii. Configure partitions with a pass-through opening at the bottom of the barrier in checkout lanes or customer service desks, and use counters as a barrier shield, if possible.

   iv. Use every other check-out lane to aid in distancing.

   v. Spread seating out (use every other pew or row) and mark six feet of space between seats, depending on your establishment.

   vi. Move the electronic payment terminal/credit card reader farther away from the cashier in order to increase the distance between the customer and the cashier, if possible.

   vii. Use verbal announcements on the loudspeaker and place signage throughout establishments at entrances, in restrooms, and in breakrooms to remind employees and customers to maintain distances of six feet from others. Download signs and flyers here.

   viii. Place visual cues such as floor decals, colored tape, or signs to indicate to customers, visitors or attendees where they should stand if in line or waiting in the establishment.

   ix. Shift primary stocking activities to off-peak or after hours when possible to reduce contact with customers.

   x. Remove or rearrange chairs and tables, or add visual cue marks in employee break rooms to support physical distancing practices between employees. Identify alternative areas such as closed customer seating spaces to accommodate overflow volume.
2. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces
   a. Clean and disinfect frequently touched shelving, displays, and reach-in refrigerator units nightly when closed to the public.
   b. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, and provide disinfectant wipes to employees to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, like workstations, phones, keyboards, cash registers, credit card touch pads, door handles, conveyer belts, tables, cart handles, menus, countertops, etc.
   c. Perform regular deep cleanings of your establishment daily.
   d. Conduct frequent cleaning of employee break rooms, rest areas, and other common areas.
   e. Clean shopping carts and baskets frequently, after each customer use if possible.
   f. Require employees to clean out lockers nightly to facilitate overnight deep cleaning processes.

   See information on cleaning products that meet EPA criteria for use against COVID-19 by clicking here.

3. Continue personal protective measures
   a. Wash hands frequently with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Click here for a list of songs to sing to pass the time.
   b. Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth.
   c. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or cough and sneeze into your elbow. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can and immediately wash hands with soap and water.
   d. Wear protective face coverings. Provide cloth face coverings for employees who are not consistently able to maintain physical distance from each other or customers. Consider adding matching cloth face coverings into your uniform.

Section 2. Maintain Healthy Operations

1. Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers containing at least 60 percent (60%) alcohol at key points such as at registers and entrances.

2. Provide protective equipment like solid, see through partitions at checkout counters or between employees in an office setting.

3. Use touchless payment options when available. Minimize exchange of cash, credit cards, reward cards and mobile devices where possible.
   a. When you must exchange paper and coin money do NOT touch your face afterword.
b. Have customers and staff place cash on the counter rather than exchange hand-to-hand.

Section 3. Maintain a Healthy Workforce/Volunteer force

1. Continue Tele-Working to the greatest extent possible.

2. Use rotating work hours to limit total amount of people in your establishment(s).

1. Implement flexible sick leave and supportive policies and practices. Consider drafting non-punitive emergency sick leave policies if sick leave is not offered to some or all employees. Employers should not require a positive COVID-19 test result or a healthcare provider’s note for employees who are sick to validate their illness, qualify for sick leave, or to return to work.
   a. View information on the Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employer Paid Leave Requirements

2. If feasible, check employees’ temperature and wellbeing before each shift. See symptoms of COVID-19.
   a. If an employee isn’t feeling well, they should leave and contact their healthcare provider.
   b. Employees with a temperature greater than 100.4F should stay home until they are fever free for 72 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications (e.g., acetaminophen, ibuprofen)

3. Ask employees to inform their supervisor if they have a sick family member at home, or if they have come into contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
   a. Employers can call New Hanover County Public Health at 910-798-6800 for guidance. Those who are considered to have been exposed to COVID-19 should self-quarantine and monitor for symptoms for 14 days.

4. If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, employees who may have been in close contact (defined as within six feet for 10 minutes) will be contacted by a public health nurse and informed of their possible exposure. This is called contact tracing and is a common practice for COVID-19 and other communicable diseases, and does not identify who has COVID-19, only that they may have been exposed. Confidentiality is maintained, as required by HIPPA and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Those who are considered to have been exposed to COVID-19 should self-quarantine and monitor for symptoms for 14 days.
   a. If all guidance and physical distancing measures are followed, closing your business may not be necessary. Contact the New Hanover County Coronavirus Call Center at 910-798-6800 for guidance on steps for cleaning, disinfecting and communicating with your staff if someone you work with has COVID-19.

5. Designate a single person as point of contact with both employees and our public health staff who is responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. Employees should know who this person is and how to contact them with questions or concerns.
   a. Consider using a hotline for employees to voice concerns anonymously.
6. Implement flexible worksites (telework) for office staff to the extent feasible.

7. Implement a system in which relief workers rotate into the cashier station to allow cashiers to leave the station to wash their hands regularly.

8. Shift primary stocking activities to off-peak or after hours when possible to reduce contact with customers.

9. Remove or rearrange chairs and tables or add visual cue marks in employee break rooms to support physical distancing practices between employees. Identify alternative areas such as closed customer seating spaces to accommodate overflow volume.

10. Adhere to all other physical distancing guidance in Section 1.

Section 4. Resources and References

- New Hanover County Public Health COVID-19 Information: [Health.NHCgov.com/Coronavirus](http://Health.NHCgov.com/Coronavirus)
  - Flyers and signs for your workspace
  - Guidance for Drive-thru and Curbside Operations
  - Guidance for Drive-thru and Curbside Operations (Español)
- NC Department of Health and Human Services
- NC Governor Roy Cooper Executive Orders
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID-19 Information
  - Symptoms
  - Guidance for Employers
  - Guidance for Community & Faith-Based Organizations
- Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employer Paid Leave Requirements
- Wilmington Chamber of Commerce COVID-19 Resources for Business