Home Health Care

SAFE MODE: Guidelines for safer operations during the COVID-19 pandemic

As Philadelphia residents and workers restart economic and physical activities, they must do so safely—that is, in a way that prevents the COVID-19 virus from spreading from person to person. Everyone must take precautions consistently to protect not only themselves, but also their family members, friends, colleagues, and everyone else.

The precautions will vary by the activity and setting, but some general guidelines apply to all.

Safety Checklist

Masks
Block the virus from spreading from infected individuals by wearing masks and requiring others to wear them.

Barriers
Use sneeze guards or plexiglass screens to prevent respiratory droplets expelled by infected persons from reaching others.

Isolate
Keep people who might be carrying the virus safely away from others (ideally at home).

Distance
Maintain space between people to reduce the chance that one infected individual will infect others.

Reduce crowds
Decrease the number of people that an infected person could pass the virus to if other steps are not successful.

Handwashing
Reduce the spread of virus from one person to another from touching contaminated surfaces.

Clean
Remove respiratory droplets that may contain virus from surfaces that people may touch.

Communicate
Ensure staff, customers, and others taking part in permitted activities understand this Safety Checklist.

This Safety Checklist must be followed at all times. If an employee, customer, or participant develops COVID-19 infection or has a positive test, businesses and other organizations must take additional precautions to stop the virus from spreading further, as described in Guidance for Essential Businesses and Organizations During COVID-19. Required precautions include calling the Philadelphia Department of Public Health at 215-685-6741 to report positive cases.

If employees or customers want to report possible health and safety violations in the workplace related to COVID-19, please call 311.

If you have questions or concerns about the applicability of these guidelines to your business, please email business@phila.gov.

Note that guidance in this document is subject to change. Please check back for updates.

This document is intended as a plain language summary of rules for reopening in the Yellow Phase and does not replace the need to follow all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

See also:

1. Order of the Secretary of Health providing for building safety measures, issued April 5, 2020.
2. Order of the Secretary of Health providing for business safety measures (to keep employees and customers safe), issued April 15, 2020.
5. Other future applicable Department of Health (DOH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance.
HEALTH CARE

Home Health Care

The following is intended as a plain language summary of rules for reopening in the Yellow Phase and does not replace the need to follow all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

See also:

CDC Interim Guidance for Implementing Home Care of People Not Requiring Hospitalization for COVID-19.
PA COVID-19 Information for Health Care Facilities.

Protections Needed

Masks

- Employers must provide appropriate PPE to workers.
- Home health workers must be masked when inside of clients’ homes. If taking breaks/meals inside a client’s home, the worker must stay at least 6 feet from others in the home.
- Ask all those in the home to mask while home healthcare workers are on site.

Isolate

- Screen every employee for symptoms before every shift or have each employee complete a self-checker and prevent them from remaining on site if they have cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, muscle pain, or new loss of taste or smell.
- It is not necessary to conduct on-site temperature measurement for staff. If you measure temperatures, use a no-touch thermometer, and do not allow anyone with a temperature of 100.4 or higher to remain on-site.
- Have sick leave policies in place so that employees excluded from the workplace do not lose earnings.

Distance

- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from others in the home besides the patient when making home visits.

Handwashing

- Employers must provide hand sanitizer to workers for use before and after all patient visits.
- Home health workers should perform hand hygiene before entering each client’s home, after entering the home before conducting patient care, as needed throughout the visit, and after leaving the home.
- Note that hand hygiene should be performed before and after touching the mask whether inside or outside of the client’s home.

Clean

- Wipe down high-touch surfaces with disinfectant at least every 4 hours. See CDC guidance for details.

Communicate

- Educate employees about symptoms and prevention of COVID-19.
- Remind all employees to:
  - Stay home if they are sick or have had contact with someone with COVID-19 within the past 14 days.
  - Cover coughs or sneezes.
  - Maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet.
  - Wear masks (see above).

If an employee develops COVID-19 infection or has a positive test, businesses and other organizations must take additional precautions to stop the virus from spreading further, as described in Guidance for Essential Businesses and Organizations During COVID-19. Required precautions include calling PDPH at 215 685-6741 to report positive cases.