

REOPENING GUIDANCE

Libraries

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

See also:

[Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](#)

[PA Guidance for Businesses Permitted to Operate during the COVID-19 Emergency](#)

Protections Needed



Masks

- Provide cloth masks for employees; however, employees are welcome to use their own cloth masks as well.
- Require employees and visitors over age 2 to mask while on site except only:
 - As necessary for the employee to eat or drink during break times. The employee should be seated at least 6 feet from others when taking off mask.
 - When seated alone in a private office or in a cubicle whose sides extend above the head of the employee.



Barriers

- Install plastic or plexiglass barriers at information and check-out desks to physically separate staff and visitors.
 - **Best practice:** Issue face shields to individual staff for interactions that may be closer than 6 feet. Face shields should not be shared and do not replace the need for a mask unless there is a medical reason a mask cannot be worn.



Isolate

- **The Free Library:** Follow the COVID Screening Policy for City Employees (policy version 1 issued June 5, 2020) which should be administered prior to the start of each onsite shift or workday. This document is included with this guidance and the self-administered assessment tool is available at phila.gov/employee-screener.
- It is not necessary to conduct onsite temperature measurement for staff or visitors. If you measure temperatures, use a no-touch thermometer, and do not allow anyone with a temperature of 100.4 or higher to remain onsite.

- Have sick leave policies in place so that employees excluded from the workplace do not lose earnings.
- 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 215-685-5488 to report positive cases.

Distance

- Adjust work assignments to ensure employees can stay at least 6 feet from each other and from visitors throughout their shifts and use barriers as above where this is not possible.
- Use floor decals or other visual cues to encourage spacing by visitors.
- Adjust seating to be at least 6 feet apart; avoid placing chairs facing each other across tables.
- If library has a community room, block off rows and seats to require 6-foot distance between persons other than family groups.



Reduce crowds

- Limit occupancy to a maximum of 5 total staff and visitors for every 1,000 square feet of public and non-public space in the facility (a rule of thumb of 113 square feet per person is used in this calculation).
 - Post this temporary occupancy limit publicly.
- Encourage use of e-books and online resources.
- Avoid activities in which visitors come together in groups if they cannot remain at least 6 feet apart (story time, other group activities) and limit group size to 25 even with spacing.



Handwashing

- Place handwashing stations or hand sanitizer at entry, break rooms, and outside communal bathrooms for all staff and visitors with prominent signage promoting use.
- Give staff hourly handwashing breaks.



Clean

- Wipe down high-touch surfaces with disinfectant at least every 4 hours. See [CDC guidance](#) for details.
- Keep books and other materials that cannot be safely cleaned out of circulation for at least 3 days.
- For electronics, such as tablets, touch screens, and keyboards:
 - Put wipeable covers on electronics and clean between each user.
 - Follow manufacturer's instruction for cleaning and disinfecting.
 - If no guidance, use alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol. Dry surface thoroughly.

A purple circular icon containing a stylized fan or air circulation symbol.

Ventilation

- If possible, increase ventilation in the building by either:
 - Opening windows and/or doors on opposite sides of the building and using fans to blow outside air through the building OR
 - Optimizing ventilation provided by the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system by:
 - Having the HVAC system checked to assure that it is working properly. If it can be adjusted, the system should be set to provide at least 6 air exchanges per hour.
 - Maximizing the amount of outside air circulated by the system.
 - Installing filters with minimum efficiency reporting values (MERV) of 13, or the highest compatible with the filter rack. It is not necessary to use high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters or ultraviolet light irradiation systems.
 - Checking that the external air inlet duct is not blocked and that it is at least 15 feet from people.



Communicate

- Educate staff about strategies to prevent spread of COVID-19.
- Post prominent signs at entrances:
 - Asking people who are sick or who have had contact with someone with COVID-19 within the past 14 days not to enter.
 - Encouraging people to cover coughs or sneezes.
 - Mandating physical distancing of at least 6 feet.
 - Mandating that all staff and visitors wear masks with reminders about how to do so appropriately (staff should be encouraged to enforce this practice for visitors).