

## Recommendations Regarding Ventilation to Reduce COVID-19 Risk in Buildings

### **Recommendations:**

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 persons.

### **Background:**

The main mechanism for transmission of COVID-19 is thought to be through respiratory droplets, produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, landing on the mouth, noses, or possibly lungs of people nearby. Under most conditions, these droplets are large enough to settle quickly. For this reason, the most important precautions people should take to reduce spread are wearing masks and keeping at a safe distance (> 6 feet) from others. It remains unclear whether aerosols can cause viral spread when other precautions are being appropriately used. To protect against this potential risk, it is appropriate to increase ventilation of indoor spaces when possible. *Increasing ventilation is an additional safety step and not a replacement for people wearing masks, keeping a safe distance from each other, reducing crowd sizes, installing droplet barriers, handwashing and other safety precautions.*

More information about COVID-19 and the City's response can be found at <https://www.phila.gov/covid>. This guidance is currently being put into appropriate Reopening guidance documents, but is posted separately until that is complete.