

Risk Control

Pennsylvania Phased Return-to-Work for Business COVID-19

The situation regarding COVID-19 is changing rapidly, along with guidance and recommended actions. Be sure to regularly check the CDC and OSHA online resources along with state and local public health websites for the latest recommendations.

In March and April 2020, most non-life-sustaining businesses were closed in an effort to stop the spread of COVID-19. Governor Wolf issued stay-at-home orders for all individuals and ordered or recommended in-person operations for most non-life-sustaining businesses, schools, places of worship, childcare establishments, government and non-emergency services, and other organizations to be closed unless granted an exemption. [See the amended list.](#)

As Pennsylvania continues efforts to return to normal, it is critical to be aware of the landscape of orders, laws, regulations, and best practices in order to avoid illness, liability, loss and compliance issues with local, state, or federal government. Failure to follow rules or guidelines could expose individuals or entities to illnesses, fines, lawsuits, insurance claims, harm to reputation, or other adverse outcomes. Being aware of, and adhering to, requirements, recommendations, and other best practices is important.

[The reopening process has three phases.](#) Numerous counties in Northern and Western Pennsylvania have moved into the Yellow Phase, with more scheduled to transition on May 22. The remainder of the Commonwealth remains in the Red Phase until June 4. [Counties moving to Yellow Phase can be found here.](#)

Safety Practices and Protections

While in the Red or Yellow Phase, certain protections must be maintained at businesses having in-person operations. Practices to be used for areas in the Red Phase are spelled out in two State Orders: [Building Safety Measures](#) issued April 5, and (for other than healthcare) [Worker Safety Orders](#) issued April 15. On May 4, [Guidance that business must follow in to order move into the Yellow Phase](#) was issued.

Safety Requirements under these guidelines and orders include:

- Cleaning and disinfecting practices.
- Providing handwashing facilities.
- Providing and requiring the use of masks for employees.
- Maintaining social distancing of 6 feet between individuals.
- Staggering employee work start / stop times and break times to prevent gathering workers.
- Ensuring that common areas are frequently cleaned.
- Promoting policies and practices on social distancing in common areas and at breaks.
- Conducting meetings and trainings virtually; limiting attendance at meetings.
- Ensuring sufficient number of personnel to carry out all measures effectively.
- Ensuring the facility has sufficient personnel to control access, maintaining order, and social distancing.
- Making all employees aware of required procedures.
- Posting COVID-19 Safety Procedures in a place of business operating in the Yellow Phase.
- Preventing non-essential visitors from entry.



The Guidelines for reopening also require that businesses, that have been conducting operations remotely through telework, to continue telework for those employees.

Where there has been Workplace Exposure to COVID-19

Under the Guidance and Orders, there are requirements to establish and implement a plan for situations where the business has been exposed to a person who is a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19. This plan must include procedures for:

- Isolating and ventilating the work area visited by the person, including at least a 24-hour delay before cleaning / disinfecting.
- Guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting the work areas.
- Identifying individuals and using CDC guidance to follow-up with individuals in contact with infected person.
- Notifying employees in contact with the infected individual.
- Monitoring the health status of the COVID-19 infected individuals and contacted workers.
- Having workers stay home and sending workers home when ill or having signs / symptoms.
- Ensuring adequate time off for sick or exposed individuals.
- Temperature screenings before work.
- Advising worker of, and ensuring workers follow protocols before returning to work.

For businesses serving the public (other than healthcare providers) within a building or in a defined area:

- Conduct business with the public by appointment where possible.
- Limit occupancy to 50% maximum at any given time.
- Set business hours to allow sufficient time to clean or restock.
- Have shields, barriers, and other measures to ensure social distancing at registers / check-out.
- Encourage online ordering (provide delivery or pick-up options).
- Designate specific times for high-risk and elderly persons to use.
- Require masks for customers (certain exceptions apply).
- Stagger registers, using every other register for businesses with multiple check-out lines.
- For multiple checkout registers, establish rotation and cleaning requirements.
- Provide handwashing breaks.
- Assign an employee to wipe down customer carts and baskets.

Construction Work

Construction work was allowed to resume under an amendment to the Stay-at-Home Order as of May 1, but only if following the April 6 and April 15 Worker and Building Safety Orders, as well as guidance for the construction issued on April 23. [This Guidance Document for Construction can be found here.](#)

Additional Resources

Center for Disease Control (CDC)

Provides comprehensive information for business and employers, including decision-making tools, guidance for specific settings, and information on cleaning and disinfecting.

OSHA

Due to the unique challenges of the outbreak, there have been numerous interpretations and relaxation of OSHA requirements. Regulatory and guidance information can be found at the [OSHA site for Coronavirus](#). A recent OSHA publication Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19 provides helpful information.

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

General guidance including questions and answers on the State requirements and restrictions related to the [Pennsylvania COVID outbreak and the reopening plan](#).

If you have questions, contact:

Timothy W. Braun
Risk Control Specialist
717.224.1835 or [email](#)

The information and suggestions provided and presented by Murray during its risk control service and in related materials are for your consideration in risk control efforts. The information and suggestions provided do not purport to identify all hazards associated with your business, nor does it guarantee that workplace accidents will be prevented. Additionally, any property inspection, issues reported, or in general, any safety or risk control techniques suggested do not warrant that such property or operations are safe or healthful, or compliant with any applicable local, state, or federal codes, laws, or regulations, and is not intended as a substitute for a proactive safety and health program managed by your company. You are encouraged to adapt these suggestions to the specific hazards of your business and to have your legal counsel review all of your plans and company policies.



murrayins.com | 717.397.9600