Office Buildings

The "Tennessee Pledge" is a plan to help Tennesseans get back to work in a safe environment, restore their livelihoods and reboot our state's economy.

Tennessee
Pledge

Office Buildings

For All Businesses

The State recommends safeguarding protocols for all businesses in Tennessee, including those that are reopening and those essential businesses that remained open during the Safer at Home order. These safeguarding protocols are based on the recommendations of the CDC and OSHA. To support the Tennessee Pledge, all employers and employees should take steps to reopen safely, help other industries be able to open more quickly, and allow Tennessee to remain healthy and open for business.

Businesses should follow guidance issued by OSHA, the CDC, and Tennessee Department of Health. These guidelines do not replace or supersede any applicable federal or other regulatory requirements or standards. To assist your business in taking appropriate precautions for COVID-19, particular industry-specific safeguarding protocols have been created with the input of private sector working groups in partnership with the Economic Recovery Group. Protocols are subject to revision and may be released on a rolling basis.

For the purposes of these guidelines, offices include but are not limited to: general and corporate offices, headquarters facilities, and branch offices; call centers and other remote service centers; and co-working or shared office spaces.

Employee Protection

- Pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order, equip, encourage, allow, or require employees to work remotely or via telework to the greatest extent practicable
- **Screen all employees reporting to work for COVID-19 symptoms with the following questions:**
    - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
    - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath or sore throat?
    - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
    - Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
    - Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
- **Temperature screening employees:**
    - Best practice: employers to take temperatures onsite with a no-touch thermometer each day upon arrival at work
    - Minimum: temperatures can be taken before arriving. Normal temperature should not exceed 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit

- Employees should wear cloth face coverings (not N-95 or medical masks, which should be reserved for healthcare workers) where close proximity is anticipated, and use other personal protection items as recommended by the CDC
- Practice recommended social distancing to the greatest extent possible — "Further is safer"
- Prohibit congregating in break rooms or common areas (e.g. dining areas, break rooms, waiting areas) and limit capacity of such areas to allow for safe social distancing, with a minimum of 6 feet between employees. Limit self-service and common food and beverage items (e.g., coffee station)
- Consider the use of modified schedules, staggered shifts or arrival/departure times, and staggered break times and meals in compliance with wage and hour laws and regulations to promote social distancing. Consider necessary modifications regarding employee shuttles, if any
- Employees should increase hygiene practices—wash hands more frequently, avoid touching face, practice good respiratory etiquette when coughing or sneezing
- Provide regular updates and training for employees about personal COVID-19 mitigation and office safeguards based on CDC guidelines
- All employees should stay home if feeling ill, report any symptoms of illness to supervisor, and notify supervisor of a COVID-19 positive case in employee's household. Employees who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the CDC (e.g., due to age or underlying conditions) are encouraged to stay home
- Direct any employee who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms (i.e., answers yes to any of the screening questions or who is running a fever) to leave the premises immediately and seek medical care and/or COVID-19 testing, per Tennessee Department of Health and CDC guidelines. Employers should maintain the confidentiality of employee health information.
- Plan for potential COVID-19 cases, and work with local health department officials when needed (e.g., monitor and trace COVID-19 cases, deep clean facilities)
- **Covered employers and employees should be aware of the provisions of the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which allows for paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons, such as for self-quarantining or seeking a medical diagnosis for COVID-19 symptoms**
- Post extensive signage on health policies, including the following documents, in the workplace to help educate building occupants on COVID-19 best practices:
    - [CDC guidance to stop the spread of germs](#)
    - [CDC guidance on COVID-19 symptoms](#)

Office Visitor Protection

- Limit visitors and vendors within the premises unless necessary. Consider the use of cloth face coverings for visitors and vendors
- **Screen all visitors and vendors prior to entry for COVID-19 symptoms with the following questions:**
    - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
    - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath or sore throat?
    - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
    - Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
    - Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
- Practice recommended social distancing to the greatest extent possible, and maintain at least 6 feet between people — "Further is safer"

Business Process Adaptations

- Limit meeting room capacity to facilitate 6-feet of separation between attendees and encourage as many attendees as possible to join via teleconference or video conference, and consider alternative open spaces for meetings
- Implement workplace cleaning and disinfection practices, according to CDC and OSHA guidelines, with regular sanitization of high-touch surfaces
- Place hand sanitizer stations in common areas
- Use a clearly designated entrance and a separate clearly designated exit to maintain social distancing, if possible with high-traffic buildings/entrances
- Use plastic shields or barriers between adjacent or open work stations and clean such shields or barriers frequently
- Consider technology to facilitate working remotely as appropriate
- Postpone large gatherings (such as group trainings, sales presentations, team gatherings), and/or hold these gatherings virtually until larger gatherings are advisable according to the CDC