



Department of Employee Relations

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Mayor

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Director

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MEMORANDUM

To: Department Heads, Cabinet Members, and Personnel Officers
From: Maria Monteagudo, Employee Relations Director
Re: Protocols for Resuming In-Person Operations and Returning Employees to the Workplace

The safety of City of Milwaukee employees and the need to minimize the spread of COVID-19 continue to be a top priority. As the City adapts and adjusts to changes in the workplace given the facts of the pandemic, DER is providing guidance to department personnel on resuming in-person operations and returning employees to the worksite. The guidance provided is based on best practices from the CDC, OSHA, WEDC and the Medical College of Wisconsin. This protocol does not apply to departments (MHD, MPD, MFD) that are involved with pandemic response efforts. Departments are expected to follow the guidance referenced in the different sections of the protocol and share this information with employees. Departments that are following different practices or deviating from the protocols outlined below should notify DER directly.

The information below identifies phases that follow recommendations from the National Safety Council to facilitate the return of employees to the workplace while also complying with provisions from the City Health Department Moving Milwaukee Forward Order. This protocol provides guidance that aligns with Phase 1 and relies on a premise that employees will continue teleworking for as long as possible unless their work requires them to resume in person operations. Additional guidance and recommendations may apply for Phases 2-3 once those conditions have been met.

- Phase 0—Pandemic Mode: Widespread Transmission and Significant Restrictions
 - All Employees should work from home when possible. Employees should only be in the office/worksite to support critical work functions that cannot be performed through telework
- Phase 1—Limited Operating Mode: Declining/Flat Transmission and Reduced Restrictions
 - When possible, employees should continue to work from home. Additional employees may return to the worksite if needed as some department functions resume and to support work functions that cannot be done through telework.
- Phase 2—Eased Restriction Mode: Contained Transmissions and Minimal Restrictions
 - Employees may return to work and departments should work on a phased in or staggered approach to employees returning to the worksite. Employees should still have the option to work from home when possible, especially if it does not impact critical work functions that need to take place onsite.



- Phase 3—New “Normal” Mode: Monitored Transmissions and Long Term Policy
 - Most employees return to the worksite; however, departments may allow employees to work from home as part of their long term plan especially if that option is working well for employees and the department.

I. Workplace/Physical Environment Considerations

1. Workplace Hazard Assessments

Following CDC guidance, departments considering bringing employees back to support essential work functions that cannot be performed through telework should consult with the City’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Safety Officer, or his designee, to ensure completion of a departmental Workplace Hazard Assessment. The assessment is designed to identify specific administrative and engineering controls needed to return employees to the workplace in a safe manner. It will take into account the work performed, the layout of the workspace and the nature of the services provided to the public or other employees and will identify necessary changes that should be implemented to ensure compliance with the physical distance requirements, protective measures and best business practices outlined in the City Health Department Moving Milwaukee Forward order. Such recommendations may include office space reconfigurations, traffic flow and control patterns, room occupancy restriction, and other items.

The Hazard Assessment will also help determine what workers fall into low and medium risk categories. If Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is required for a job because administrative controls are insufficient to mitigate the risk, the Safety Officer or designee will prepare a specific protocol for that job or job responsibility including PPE donning and doffing (putting on and removing), usage, and storage as well as other recommendations. This will be written in instructional format and satisfy OSHA required training for PPE use in the workplace. Please note that masks and cloth face coverings are not considered PPE for the purposes of this communication.

The information and recommendations resulting from the Hazard Assessment will be provided to department leadership and should be shared with employees and supervisors. It will also be shared with DER to ensure compliance and enforcement. Departments should contact Lindor Schmidt at LESCHMI@milwaukee.gov to schedule a Hazard Assessment. Implementation of the recommendations from the Hazard Assessment is expected before returning employees to medium and high risk job activities.

2. Protective Measure Requirements

The practices outlined below follow physical distance guidelines, protective measure requirements and safe business practices outlined in the City Health Department Moving Milwaukee Forward order.

a) Department Protective Practices

- Continue promoting healthy hygiene practices including hand washing, covering coughs, avoid touching faces, and sneeze or cough into a tissue or the inside of the elbow;

- Limit or cancel all group events, gatherings, or meetings where social distancing of at least 6 feet cannot be maintained between participants or assess spaces to determine the maximum capacity of occupants to maintain the advised distance from each individual.
- The number of individuals in a location should be limited to the greater of either 25% of total occupancy limits for that area or one person for every 30 square feet of floor space. Room signs should indicate occupancy limits
- Replace in-person meetings with video or teleconference calls;
- If in person meetings are necessary, the meeting should be held in an open, well-ventilated space that maintains the distances noted above and employees should wear face coverings;
- Limit or restrict the use of shared office equipment;
- Provide supplies to ensure onsite workers are cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces in their workspaces regularly or at a minimum at the beginning and end of their shifts;
- Restrict occupancy of certain areas, close or limit employee numbers in lunch rooms and break rooms and consider limiting use of shared appliances like refrigerators and microwaves;
- Remove furniture in congregation prone areas;
- Control traffic flow where narrow spaces don't allow social distancing,
- Discourage handshaking and encourage employees to use non-contact greeting methods,
- Define customer and visitor contact protocols including determining the requirements of in person operations to ensure the safety of both the employees and the public, and
- Display appropriate signage to promote social distancing, hand washing, occupancy limits for rooms, flow and direction of traffic. Wall and floor signs can be ordered through DER: anogan@milwaukee.gov

b) Masks or Face Coverings

Employees should wear personal cloth face coverings or masks whenever they leave their personal work stations. CDC guidance on cloth face coverings is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>. Wearing a face covering does not eliminate the need to physically distance from each other and frequent handwashing and disinfecting common touched surfaces should be done regularly. Face masks should be provided by the department if employees do not have a face covering they can use.

Members of the public visiting the City Hall complex or any City facility will be strongly encouraged to wear cloth face coverings or masks. However, when one-on-one services are sought and other measures fail to ensure the appropriate social distancing to protect both employees and the public, masks or face coverings will be required. While members of the public will be encouraged to bring their own masks or face

coverings, the department should work with DOA Purchasing to ensure a small supply is available so that services can be performed without delay.

The Amazon (COVID-19 store) is an available resource for cloth and non-surgical masks as well as hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes. City department heads or their designees can also make requests for masks or face coverings through the Unified Emergency Operations Center (UEOC) by submitting a request through this link: <https://mpd.readyop.com/fs/4cb0/b931>

Please keep in my mind that First responders, Health Care Providers, and other employees identified by the hazard assessments as involved in high risk or high exposure activities will take first priority in regard to UEOC PPE supply requests. For additional information regarding the procurement of PPE supplies please contact Rhonda Kelsey, Purchasing Director via email rkelse@milwaukee.gov.

c) Employee Health Screenings

At this time, the City is not recommending departments conduct COVID-19 symptom screening onsite; however, employees are encouraged to screen their temperature and monitor for any other COVID-19 symptoms before reporting to work. If an employee has an elevated temperature (greater than 100.4) or other COVID-19 symptoms, he/she should not come to work and follow protocols for notifying their department supervisor. The department should provide information about the City's Employee COVID-19 testing to employees. In addition, departments should follow DER's COVID-19 policy and administrative guidelines which outlines what to do when an employee calls in with potential COVID-19 symptoms. Please see Section II, 2a-d for DER's policy information and information about employee testing.

3. Public Areas, Communal Spaces and Customer Service Areas

City of Milwaukee buildings with areas open to the public and other communal spaces like the City Hall Rotunda, hallways, elevators, stairwells, restrooms, etc. will be addressed by DPW to determine the necessary interventions to ensure the safety of employees and visitors. It may be necessary to limit traffic flow to certain entries and exit points, follow directional arrows placed on floors to encourage one-way traffic flow and minimize interactions, and temporarily remove or cover unnecessary touchpoints/equipment like shared benches, drinking fountains and informational displays. If public areas in certain buildings or work sites have not been addressed, departments should contact Thomas Tarkowski, ttarko@milwaukee.gov in DPW to schedule needed interventions.

Department customer service areas should consider the following practices to minimize direct interactions with the public and visitors including:

- Install partitions and/or Plexiglas barriers between work stations and around customer service counters
- Move electronic payment readers away from employees/cashiers

- Post signs, floor markings and other visual cues to indicate where visitors/customers should stand or wait in line
- Minimize in-person interactions by increasing or continuing online or telephonic payment options, curbside pickup and delivery options where feasible

4. Environmental Interventions

Departments with unique or specialized cleaning and environmental interventions should contact DPW directly, Thomas Tarkowski, ttarko@milwaukee.gov and notify the appropriate personnel that employees will be returning to the workplace and that more aggressive cleaning and disinfecting practices should be restored. Departments should also work to secure hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes for use by employees as needed to clean their own work surfaces. Please reference Section I, 2b for information on how to obtain hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes.

II. Administrative and Policy Considerations

1. Continuation of Flexible Work Options and Telework

Consistent with Phase I outlined above, CDC Guidance and the City Health Department Moving Milwaukee Forward Order, **where telecommuting options remain feasible, that should continue into the foreseeable future**. Departments should only allow employees to return to the workplace for job functions that cannot be carried out through telework. If a limited number of employees are returning to the workplace, their return is contingent upon the completion of a Hazard Assessment and the implementation of the appropriate recommended interventions. If employees must be at the worksite, departments should also consider staggering start times and days that employees are in the office.

2. DER COVID-19 Policies/Protocols

Departments must ensure enforcement of the City's policies and protocols which can be found on DER's main webpage: www.milwaukee.gov/der

- a) Protocol for Responding to a Confirmed Case of COVID-19 or Symptomatic Individuals: Employees returning to the workplace must be reminded of the requirements per the City's policy including staying home when sick, notifying the department when testing positive for COVID-19 or being a "close contact" subject to quarantine requirements.
- b) Policy for Employment and Workplace Considerations Related to COVID-19: Addresses employment and workplace considerations related to the COVID-19 and City policies, practices, and procedures that may be impacted.
- c) Departments are required to provide alternatives to staff who are considered high risk (elderly, or with a compromised immune system, and those with chronic conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and others). Contact Katherine Holiday in DER (kholid@milwaukee.gov) for the most recent EEOC guidance on ADA accommodations if you have employees with current accommodations or

employees who are requesting accommodations during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- d) Free COVID-19 Testing for Symptomatic Employees: Tests are being offered Monday through Friday from 9am to 5pm and appointments are required. Employees call a dedicated scheduling line, 414-286-5777, and a scheduler will determine if a test is needed based on the employee's symptoms. Employees who develop symptoms while at work, should be separated from other employees, sent home and advised of the City's free COVID-19 testing.

3. Visitors and Customers

Departments need to determine whether there will be any contact with the public via regular office hours or appointments. Departments should continue to modify practices to facilitate online processes to limit the number of onsite visitors. In the event that members from the public will be allowed to enter workspaces, departments should consider:

- Implementation of a protocol that requires the individual to complete a questionnaire attesting to not having a fever or other symptoms of COVID-19. A sample Department Visitor Statement can be found on DER's website: www.milwaukee.gov/der under "Department Resources."
- Restricting or limiting any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations.
- If visitors are allowed, share expectations with visitors prior to their arrival, through information posted online, social media and signs posted at the worksite.
- Ensure that contractors working onsite are aware of City policies and the safety practices outlined in this document and that all protocols are followed.

III. Employee Communication and Support

Departments are responsible for communicating departmental protocols to employees regarding actions being taken to prevent COVID-19 exposure. Department protocols must be consistent and follow the City's overall policy as well as recommendations based on the completed Workplace Hazard Assessments. Information shared with employees should help them recognize areas or work practices that pose a risk for spreading the virus as well as a process to report situations that may need attention and mitigation.

Departments should ensure that the most current information/signage from the CDC and OSHA is posted at each worksite. Departments can place orders for additional floor and wall signs that promote social distancing, hand washing, traffic direction and flow through DER:

anogan@milwaukee.gov. Departments should designate one or more employees to monitor process improvements and worksite safety changes identified through the City's protocol and site specific Workplace Hazard Assessment to ensure recommendations are implemented. Concerns regarding areas or practices that pose a risk to employees should be directed to safety1st@milwaukee.gov.

IV. Employee Wellbeing, Emotional and Mental Health

The City of Milwaukee remains committed to the health, safety, and well-being of its employees and families. During the COVID-19 pandemic and challenging times filled with uncertainty, it is especially important for employees to take care of themselves and their family members.

The DER and the City's health and wellness partners have redesigned and transitioned all current programs and services to a telephonic and virtual format that is easy to access for employees. The City wants to ensure all health and wellness programming continues to be relevant and tailored to fit the various circumstances that employees are experiencing during this time. New programs and services are being launched weekly to focus on areas where employees and their families may need extra support.

- The Wellness Website has a list of all current health and wellness programs and services including the City's onsite clinics: www.milwaukee.gov/wycm
- The City's onsite EAP Coordinator, Cris Zamora, offers confidential counseling, assessment and referral services for employees and families when they need help navigating resources for any situation affecting their life. Cris can be contacted directly at 414-286-3145 or czamora@milwaukee.gov. For more information visit: www.milwaukee.gov/der/EAP
- UnitedHealthcare Emotional Support Help Line
 - Available and free of charge to anyone (both UHC and non-UHC members)
 - Call 1-866-342-6892 to connect to caring professionals
- The City publishes important COVID-19 Benefit Updates on a regular basis www.milwaukee.gov/COVID19BenefitsUpdates
- City benefit information can be found at: www.milwaukee.gov/benefits