



---

## OFFICES

In Phase 1, offices can open at up to 50% capacity. Employees should continue to work from home where possible.

# OFFICES

## OVERVIEW

As Connecticut's offices reopen, the most important consideration will be the health and safety of employees. Businesses must exercise caution throughout the reopening, ensuring strict adherence to the protocols listed here. Those businesses that are not able to meet the rules listed here by May 20, should delay opening until they are able to.

While these rules provide a way for offices to reopen in as safe a manner as possible, risks to employees cannot be fully mitigated. Employees who choose or are instructed to return to their offices during this time should be fully aware of potential risks. Individuals over the age of 65 or with other health conditions should not visit offices, but instead continue to stay home and stay safe.

Businesses should take these rules as the minimum baseline of precautions needed to protect public health in Connecticut. Individual businesses should take additional measures as recommended by industry guidelines or by common sense applied to their particular situation. We urge employees to stay vigilant and pay attention as to whether their offices are faithfully implementing these rules.

## REOPEN RULES FOR OFFICES

For offices, **employees are encouraged to continue to work from home where possible**. Tenants should coordinate with building owners to ensure these rules are implemented effectively. Common areas shared between tenants are the responsibility of the landlord (e.g. lobbies, elevators, etc.), while individual tenant areas are the responsibility of the tenant (e.g. individual floors, kitchen areas, etc.).

These rules are intended to help offices safely get back to work. The information here can be supplemented with guidance from professional organizations and by other industry groups, some of which are listed below. These rules may be updated.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

**Occupational Safety and Health Administration**  
<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>



# OFFICES



## WORK FROM HOME

Encourage employees to continue to work from home where possible, and put in appropriate measures to facilitate this where possible.



## PLAN FOR REOPENING

Share these rules with your employees and inform them of any additional specific measures being taken in response to COVID-19.



## PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

Appoint a program administrator who is accountable for implementing these rules.



## SHIFTS

Stagger shift start/stop times and break times to minimize contact across employees.



## LOG EMPLOYEES

Maintain a log of employees on premise over time, to support contact tracing.



## LIMIT VISITORS

Limit visitors and service providers on-site; shipping and deliveries must be completed in designated areas.



## TRAINING

Institute a training program and ensure employee participation in the program prior to reopen. Training shall include:

- The rules contained in this document.
- Protocols on how to clean and use cleaning products (including disinfectants) safely.

Additional guidance can be found here:

[https://osha.washington.edu/sites/default/files/documents/FactSheet\\_Cleaning\\_Final\\_UWDEOHS\\_0.pdf](https://osha.washington.edu/sites/default/files/documents/FactSheet_Cleaning_Final_UWDEOHS_0.pdf)

**Note:** If any on-site duties are subcontracted, it is the employer's responsibility to ensure subcontractors are also appropriately trained.

The training shall be provided at no cost to the employee and during working hours. The training materials shall be presented in the language and at the literacy level of the employees. There shall also be weekly refreshers on policies.



## PERSONAL PROTECTION

Estimate required personal protection for employees and begin procuring.



## CLEANING PLAN

Develop cleaning checklists that incorporate these rules. Ensure it is clear which employees are responsible for implementing the plans.

# OFFICES



## THOROUGH CLEANING

Complete a thorough cleaning of facility prior to reopening, including, but not limited to:

- Entrances/lobbies, bathrooms, kitchens, hallways, elevators, door handles/door knobs, shared equipment (e.g., printers, scanners, phones, vending machines), desks, chairs, computers, monitors



## CERTIFICATION

Complete the self-certification on the DECD website to receive a Reopen CT badge. Once complete, businesses can choose to post the badge on-site and on social media to advertise adherence to CT rules and build customer confidence.



# OFFICES



## SIGNAGE

Post clear signage that reinforces new policies, like:

- Social distancing protocols
- Cleaning and disinfection protocols
- Personal protection protocols (face masks, gloves)
- Employees shall stay home if sick/experiencing symptoms



## VENTILATION

Increase ventilation rates and increase the percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system where possible.



## SOCIAL DISTANCING MARKERS

Install visual social distancing markers to encourage employees to remain 6ft apart (e.g., in the lobby, in workspaces).



## PARTITIONS

Use partitions between employees where a 6ft distance cannot be maintained, where possible.



## SHARED EQUIPMENT

Ensure employees do not share equipment to the extent possible. If shared, clean after each use.



## OFFICE ARRANGEMENT

Rearrange space to maintain 6ft of distance between employees and stagger the position of desks so employees can avoid sitting opposite each other. This may require keeping some desks empty and/or marking desks that should not be used.



## DISCRETE WORK ZONES

Where possible, segment the workspace into discrete zones, prevent movement between zones, and close spaces where employees congregate (e.g., individuals stay on a single floor, or single part of the office).



## NON-ESSENTIAL AMENITIES

Close or remove amenities non-essential to businesses' main function, like:

- Coat rooms – have employees bring their personal belongings to their workstation.

# OFFICES



## ELEVATORS

Encourage social distancing while using elevators, by:

- Encouraging social distancing while individuals queue using visual markers.
- Using signage displaying healthy elevator use protocols, including passenger limits and safe distances in the carriage.
- Using elevator attendants to manage flow and discourage over-crowding.
- Using floor markers that establish distancing zones and describe where to stand.
- Encourage alternatives, such as stairs, where possible.



## TOUCHLESS APPLIANCES

Install touchless appliances wherever possible, including:

- Paper towel, soap dispensers, water fountains.
- Doors: make doors no touch or have a door person during high volume times.



## HOTLINE FOR VIOLATIONS

Post clear signage that includes the state hotline (211) for employees and customers to report potential violations of these rules.

# OFFICES

## PERSONAL PROTECTION FOR EMPLOYEES

- All employees are required to wear a face mask or other cloth face covering that completely covers the nose and mouth, unless doing so would be contrary to his or her health or safety due to medical conditions.
- Employees may utilize their own cloth face covering over that provided by their employer if they choose.
- Gloves and eye protection are required when using cleaning chemicals.
- In workplace settings where employees are working alone in segregated spaces (e.g., cubicles with walls, private offices, etc.), employees may remove their masks. However, workers shall wear a mask or face covering from the time they enter the building until the time they arrive at their cubicle/workstation, and at any time they are leaving their work station and moving around common areas (e.g., in hallways and stairwells, going to the restroom or break room, etc.). For employees working in congregate settings (e.g., open manufacturing floors, warehouses, areas open to the public, shared offices, or similar settings), those workers shall wear a face covering as above, as well as when they are at their work station. In addition, continuous wearing of masks is not required in outdoor workspaces where employees do not regularly come within 6ft of other employees.

## EMPLOYERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING PERSONAL PROTECTION TO THEIR EMPLOYEES

- If businesses do not have adequate personal protection, they cannot open.

## PERSONAL PROTECTION FOR CUSTOMERS & VISITORS

- Customers and visitors are required to bring and wear masks or cloth face coverings that completely cover the nose and mouth unless doing so would be contrary to his or her health or safety due to a medical condition. If the customer or visitor does not have a mask or face covering, then they either must be provided one by the site employer or not allowed to enter the facility.

# OFFICES



## HAND SANITIZER

Hand sanitizer shall be made available at entrance points and common areas, where possible.



## HANDWASHING

Ensure employees wash their hands routinely using soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



## CLEANING, DISINFECTANT PRODUCTS, AND/OR DISPOSABLE DISINFECTANT WIPES

Make available near commonly used surfaces, where possible, like:

- Desks
- Chairs
- Bathrooms
- Elevators
- Coffee machines
- Shared equipment (e.g., printers, scanners, phones, monitors)



## BATHROOMS

Clean and disinfect frequently, implement use of cleaning log for tracking. Clean multiple times a day and hourly during busy times.

- Recommend posting signage encouraging reduced capacity in bathrooms and reminding individuals to wash their hands and wear a mask.
- Consider placing a waste basket outside of the bathroom.



## CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

Businesses shall follow federal guidelines (CDC, EPA) on what specific products should be used and how:

- Use products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2 and that are appropriate for the surface. Prior to wiping the surface, allow the disinfectant to sit for the necessary contact time recommended by the manufacturer. Train staff on proper cleaning procedures to ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants.
- Disinfectants are irritants and sensitizers, and should be used cautiously. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily and shared objects after each use.
- Clean and disinfect common areas, high transit areas, and frequently touched surfaces on an ongoing basis (at least daily) and more frequently if used more often. Clean and disinfect shared objects after each use. Examples include:

- |  |  |                       |
|--|--|-----------------------|
| • Entrances/lobbies                          | • Door handles/<br>door knobs  | • Desks and chairs    |
| • Kitchens                                   | • Shared equipment<br>(e.g., printers, scanners,<br>phones, vending<br>machines) | • Computers, monitors |
| • Hallways                                   |  | • Coffee machines     |
| • Elevators, including<br>panels and buttons |  |                       |



# OFFICES



## DAILY HEALTH CHECK

Ask employees resuming on-premise work to confirm they have not experienced COVID-19 CDC-defined symptoms and to monitor their own symptoms; including cough, shortness of breath, or any two of the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

Employees should stay home if sick.



## IN THE EVENT OF A POSITIVE COVID-19 CASE

Employees shall inform their employers and follow state testing and contact tracing protocols. **In addition,**

- Employee should contact local public health to initiate contact tracing.
- Recommend 24 hour passive decontamination for office space in the event of a positive case and follow CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting.
- Recommend employer notify landlord of positive case within 24 hours; landlord to promptly disseminate relevant information to other tenants on the movement of the infected individual.
- Recommend landlord notification to tenants include link to CDC guidelines explaining what you should do if you suspect you were exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID-19.



## WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

Employers may not retaliate against workers for raising concerns about COVID-related safety and health conditions.

- Additional information can be accessed at [www.OSHA.gov](http://www.OSHA.gov).
- Additional information for the public sector can be accessed at [www.connosha.com](http://www.connosha.com).



## LEAVE

Employers shall adhere to federal guidance pertaining to paid leave for employees and provide this guidance to employees. Employers shall post the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) Department of Labor poster. The poster can be accessed at: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/posters>

- Additional guidance can be accessed at: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-employee-paid-leave>