

REOPEN

Connecticut[®]

SAFER. STRONGER. TOGETHER.



Governor Ned Lamont

Best Practices for Reopening

March 19, 2021

BEST PRACTICES FOR REOPENING

GOAL

Proactively protect public health and speed up the pace of economic, educational, and community recovery while restoring Connecticut's quality of life.

1

SAFETY FIRST

We will reopen society safely and securely with a proactive program that safeguards the health of our vulnerable residents, continues physical distancing, and provides clear safeguard rules for businesses and institutions deemed safe to reopen.

2

SCIENCE-DRIVEN

Our strategy will rely on a scientifically validated set of public health interventions. Patient assessment, testing, proactive tracing, field studies, and public health guidance will be deployed simultaneously to contain infection.

3

PREPARED

We will work closely with hospitals and health systems to procure and distribute critical personal protective equipment, and assess capacity of beds and ventilators to ensure optimal standard of care.

4

CHOICE

Individual businesses within sectors allowed to open are empowered to make their own choice on when they reopen. When they open, they must comply with rules we lay out to safeguard their employees and customers.

5

DYNAMIC

We include a suite of tools to inform an adaptive plan that can be nimbly scaled or rolled back rapidly based on real-time critical health metrics.

BEST PRACTICES FOR REOPENING

HOW WE WILL OPEN OUR ECONOMY SAFELY

Our plan to open the economy will address two factors:

WHAT businesses can open and when.

HOW businesses must operate **if they choose to open**.

WHAT:

- We know that some businesses put employees and customers at greater risk of transmission.
- We will prioritize opening businesses that pose a lower transmission risk and drive outsized impact on the economy.
- Transmission risk is defined as contact intensity and modification potential of businesses.
 - Contact intensity considers contact proximity, contact length, and number of contacts.
 - Modification potential considers the businesses' ability to socially distance and sanitize in accordance with regulations.
- We will assess the impact on state economic health with a focus on number of employed individuals, total GDP impacted, and impact on small businesses that make up the backbone of our economy.

HOW:

- We will provide clear operational guidance to businesses on how to reopen while ensuring the safety of both employees and customers.
- Guidance will include social distancing and hygiene, as well as the use of personal protection – for business operators, workers, and customers.
- The goal is to not only open safely, but create confidence in our society across employers, employees, and customers.
- The level of guidance will gradually become less restrictive over time, as our confidence in the ability to monitor and contain the disease increases.

BEST PRACTICES FOR REOPENING

WHAT: SECTOR REOPENING OVER TIME

The state will open its economy with a gradual approach.

The first set of businesses started reopening when we saw a sustained 14-day decline in hospitalizations, had adequate testing capacity, had a contact tracing system in place, and had procured sufficient PPE. The timing for that reopen was **May 20th, 2020**.

ALWAYS OPEN	Manufacturing Construction Real estate	Utilities Essential retail Child care	Hospitals
MAY 20TH	Restaurants (outdoor only, no bar areas) Outdoor recreation (limited capacity)	Remaining retail Offices (continue WFH where possible)	Museums, Zoos (outdoor only) University research
JUNE 1ST	Hair salons, Barbershops		
JUNE 17TH	Restaurants (outdoor, indoor, no bar areas) Hotels/Lodging All personal services Indoor recreation	Sports, Sports clubs & complexes, Gyms, Fitness centers, Pools Outdoor arts, Entertainment, Events (limited capacity)	Amusement parks Libraries Museums, Zoos, Aquariums Social clubs
JULY 20TH	Indoor events	Outdoor events	
SEPTEMBER 1ST	Senior Centers		
OCTOBER 8TH	Indoor Performing Arts Venues		

BEST PRACTICES FOR REOPENING

HOW: SAFEGUARDS

As we continue to reopen businesses, we will open at our strictest controls on business operations and societal interaction. This will include, among other measures:

- Strict cleaning and disinfection protocols in all settings.
- Those who can work from home should continue to do so.
- Those in high-risk groups (comorbidities) and over the age of 65 should continue to stay safe and stay home.
- Facemasks should continue to be worn in public at all times.
- Social gatherings will be restricted in accordance to the Governor's executive order.

As we see progress on a defined set of public health metrics (detail to follow), we will gradually loosen safeguards. This will allow for the next set of businesses to open and potentially for businesses already open to operate with additional leeway. We expect this will occur over the coming months.

As always, we will make decisions based on data and science. Our plan intentionally allows for sufficient time for learning, adoption of behaviors, and ultimately the achievement of improved health metrics that create the necessary environment for new business operations. If public health metrics deteriorate, the State may choose to revert back to stricter safeguards.



SENIOR CENTERS

SENIOR CENTERS

OVERVIEW

For Senior Centers, the most important consideration will be the health and safety of participants and employees. Given Senior Center participants are part of the most at risk population, Senior Centers must exercise caution throughout the reopening, ensuring strict adherence to the protocols listed [on the Sector Rules for Reopening webpage](#). Those Senior Centers that are not able to meet [state requirements](#) shall delay opening until they are able.

While these [best practices](#) provide a way for Senior Centers to reopen in as safe a manner as possible, risks to participants and employees cannot be fully mitigated. Participants and employees who choose to visit/partake in these activities during this time should be fully aware of potential risks.

All activities offered by the Senior Centers should be managed at the Senior Centers' discretion, and their ability to offer the activities while adhering to [state requirements](#) and ensuring the safety of the participants and employees. Senior Centers will phase in different group activities based on the Senior Centers' determination of the ability to comply with the [state requirements](#).

Senior Centers should take these [best practices](#) as the minimum baseline of precautions needed to protect public health in Connecticut. Individual Senior Centers should take additional measures as recommended by industry guidelines or by common sense applied to their particular situation.

We urge Senior Centers and employees to stay vigilant and pay attention as to whether the Senior Centers are faithfully implementing these [best practices](#).

NOTE: Other senior community settings (adult day centers, senior community services) may consider using these guidelines as well where there is overlap in population served and types of activities offered.



FURTHER RESOURCES

NCOA

<https://www.ncoa.org/news/ncoa-news/national-institute-of-senior-centers-news/covid-19-resources-for-senior-centers/>

MCOA

<https://mcoaonline.com/recommendations-for-reopening/>

SENIOR CENTERS

PLAN FOR REOPENING

Share these **best practices** 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.



CLEANING PLAN

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

TRAINING

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

- **Best practices** contained in this document
- Protocols on how to clean and use cleaning products (incl. disinfectants) safely
- Additional guidance can be found here:
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 **should** be provided at no cost to the employee and during working hours. The training materials **should** be presented in the language and at the literacy level of the employees. Employers **should** continuously update staff on changes to these **best practices**.



PERSONAL PROTECTION

Estimate required personal protection for employees and begin procuring.



LOG EMPLOYEES

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



THOROUGH CLEANING

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

- Bathrooms
- Equipment
- Desks/work stations



LOG PARTICIPANTS

Maintain a log of participants on-premise to support contact tracing through front desk receptionist check-in.

SENIOR CENTERS



SHIFTS

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



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.



CAPACITY TRACKING

Employers are responsible for enforcing revised capacity limits.

Employees must wear a facemask or other cloth face covering.

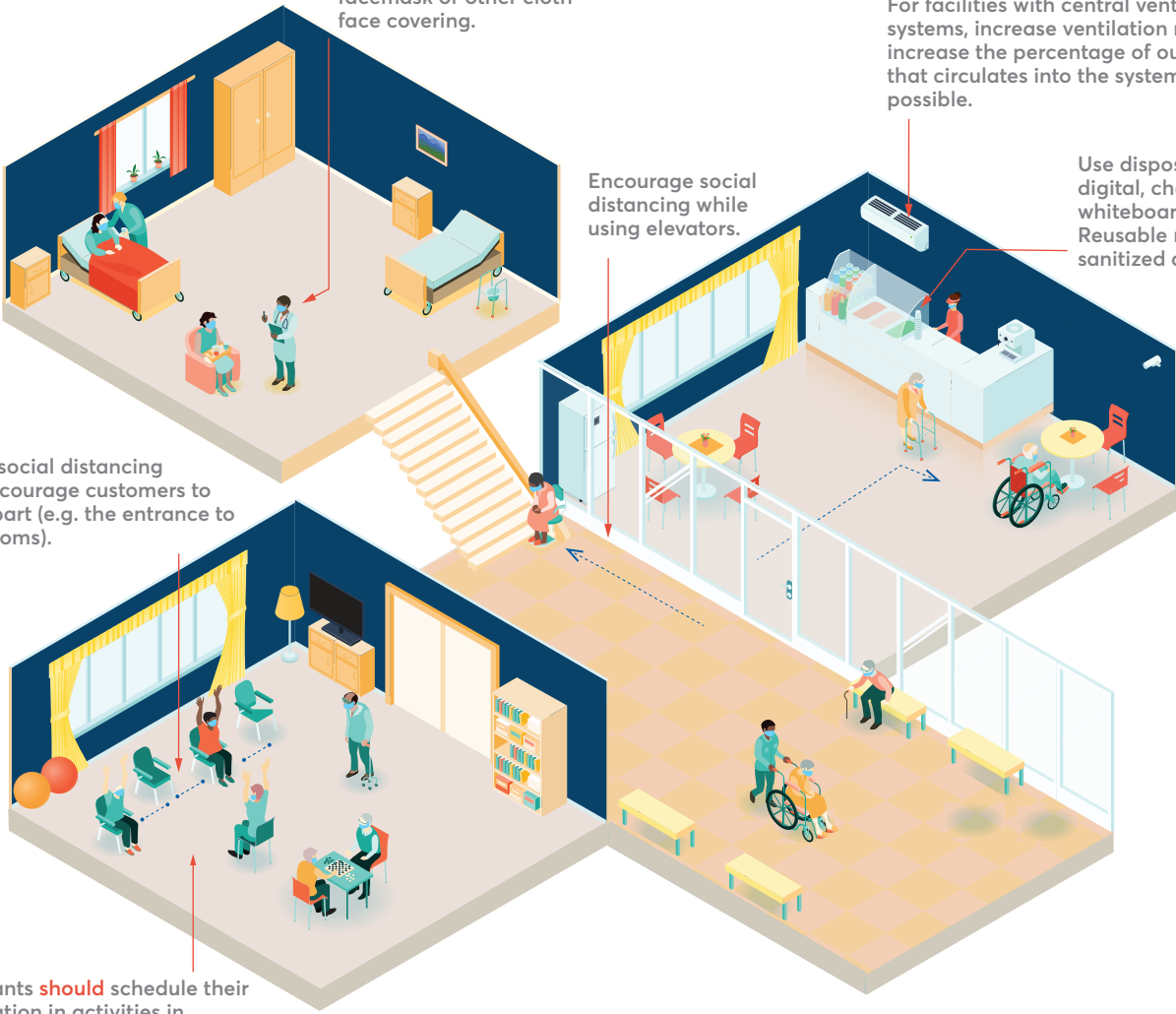
For facilities with central ventilation systems, increase ventilation rates and increase the percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system where possible.

Encourage social distancing while using elevators.

Use disposable paper, digital, chalkboard or whiteboard menus. Reusable menus must be sanitized after every use.

Install visual, social distancing markers to encourage customers to remain 6 ft apart (e.g. the entrance to the facility, rooms).

Participants **should** schedule their participation in activities in advance of arriving.



SENIOR CENTERS

ENTRY & EXIT

Consider an exit from the facility separate from the entrance to allow for one-way foot traffic.

FRONT DESK CHECK-IN

Install barrier at check-in desk or install visual social distancing markers to encourage participants to remain 6 ft apart. Thorough cleaning after each receptionist shift.



SIGNAGE

Post clear signage that reinforces new policies, e.g.:

- Social distancing protocols
- Cleaning and disinfection protocols
- Personal protection protocols (facemasks, gloves)
- Employees shall stay home if sick/experiencing symptoms
- Customers shall not enter if they are experiencing symptoms
- Additional signage can be found here:

<https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/Coronavirus-Business-Recovery/COVID-19-Signage-for-Download>



VENTILATION

For facilities with central ventilation systems, increase ventilation rates and increase the percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system where possible. For facilities where a central ventilation system is not used, window air conditioning units or unit ventilators should be adjusted to maximize fresh air intake into the system; blower fans should be set on low speed and pointed away from room occupants to the extent possible. Ceiling fans should be adjusted so that fins are rotating in a direction that draws air up toward the ceiling rather than down onto occupants. Window fans should be turned to exhaust air out of the window in the direction of the outdoors. Window fans that blow air into a room or free-standing fans that only serve to circulate existing air around a room should not be used.



FACILITIES

Temporarily close common areas where participants or employees may congregate. If spaces are shared across organizations, ensure space is reserved and scheduled in advance, with enough time between uses to allow for deep cleaning between activities.



SOCIAL DISTANCING MARKERS

Install visual social distancing markers to encourage customers to remain 6 ft apart (e.g. the entrance to the facility, rooms).



TIMING

Consider limiting length of activities to avoid unnecessary exposure, decrease congestion, and allow for additional sanitization.



LAYOUT

Adjust equipment layout and close or restrict access to equipment to maintain at least 6 ft of distance between equipment.

SENIOR CENTERS



INTRADAY CLEANING

Employees shall clean all equipment frequently, and participants must wipe down equipment after each use. If participants are unable to wipe down equipment, employees shall clean their equipment after its use.



DISCRETE WORK ZONES FOR EMPLOYEES

Employees should be assigned specific areas to clean and disinfect within the facility to prevent omitting areas that need attention.



SHARED EQUIPMENT

To the greatest extent possible, ensure that participants do not share equipment. If shared, clean after every use.



TOUCHLESS APPLIANCES

Install touchless appliances wherever possible, including:

- Contactless payments, paper towel dispensers, soap dispensers, trash cans

NON-ESSENTIAL AMENITIES

Amenities non-essential to a Senior Center's main function are allowed but must be thoroughly cleaned in-between group usage. Markings on the ground shall be used to section off these amenities and ensure they are at least 6 ft away from the closest chair back/person. Only those playing shall be allowed around these areas; others must remain in their seating area. Masks must be worn at all times and no food or drink is allowed in these areas.



HOTLINE FOR VIOLATIONS

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



WATER FOUNTAINS

Participants shall be required to bring their own water bottles/mugs. Water fountain use shall be restricted to water bottle filling stations only. Congregating at stations shall be limited and signage reinforcing the use of filling stations only must be displayed.

SENIOR CENTERS



SELF-SERVE BEVERAGE STATIONS

Self-serve beverage stations are allowed but must adhere to the guidelines below.

- Hand sanitizer **should** be made available next to beverage stations and operators **should** require customers to use before pouring beverages. Cello or paper wrapped straws and stirrers are **recommended**. Cups and lids **should** be from single pull dispenser or other method to minimize contact. Sweeteners, sugars, and creamers **should** be individual packets or automated (push button or contactless) dispensers. Floor markers **should** be installed to achieve social distancing. Samplings and refills of personal mugs and cups are not **recommended**. Frequent disinfecting of the beverage station **should** take place, even during busy times.



FOOD SERVICES / CAFES

- Cafes allowed to open but **should** follow **Best Practices** for Restaurants.
- Prepackaged food and drink does not have to follow **Best Practices** for Restaurants.
- Congregate meal sites should not open at this time.



FACILITY RENTALS

Individuals that are renting the physical space should comply with these Sector Rules and Sector Rules for Indoor/Outdoor Events.



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.

SENIOR CENTERS

ALL ACTIVITIES OFFERED BY THE SENIOR CENTERS SHOULD BE MANAGED AT THE SENIOR CENTERS' DISCRETION, AND THEIR ABILITY TO OFFER THE ACTIVITIES WHILE ADHERING TO THESE GUIDELINES AND ENSURING THE SAFETY OF THE PARTICIPANTS AND EMPLOYEES. SENIOR CENTERS WILL PHASE IN DIFFERENT GROUP ACTIVITIES BASED ON THE SENIOR CENTERS' DETERMINATION OF THE ABILITY TO COMPLY WITH THE GUIDELINES.

WHEN CONSIDERING THE REOPENING OF ACTIVITIES, SENIOR CENTERS SHOULD CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- 1.) Can the activity still be effectively done virtually?
- 2.) What is the proximity to others during the activity?
- 3.) What is the duration of the activity?
- 4.) How many people can participate while social distancing?
- 5.) How easy is it to effectively clean the equipment needed for the activity?
- 6.) What PPE is required for the activity?
- 7.) Are there any special cleaning protocols required to sanitize the space and equipment?
- 8.) Will any participants be less likely to comply with the guidelines?
- 9.) Take into consideration the health status of individual members attending.

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ACTIVITY SIGN UP

Participants **should** schedule their participation in activities in advance of arriving. No touch signups (e.g. phone, online) are encouraged. If in-person, sign up lists should be managed by an employee to avoid participants all touching the same sign up papers and pens.



SCHEDULING

Sufficiently adjust activity schedules to allow for deep cleaning between activities. Start times should be staggered where no more than half of the building is changing over at any given time.



SOCIAL SERVICE APPOINTMENTS

Remote and virtual appointments encouraged. Social distancing and barriers in place when in-person appointments.

PERSONAL SERVICES

Should follow **Best Practices** for Personal Services.



HAIR SERVICES

Should follow **Best Practices** for Hair Salons & Barbershops.



SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

Limit areas for congregation. Ensure lounge and other spaces have social distancing markers to maintain 6 ft of separation to reduce congregation.



INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES

Participants should engage in activities while maintaining appropriate social distancing. All equipment (e.g. computers) should be thoroughly cleaned after every use. Equipment that is difficult to clean should not be offered during initial reopening.



OUTDOOR GROUP ACTIVITIES

Group activities should be held outdoors or virtually to the greatest extent possible while maintaining 6 ft of social distancing at all times.



INDOOR GROUP ACTIVITIES

Indoor group activities **should maintain** 6 ft of social distancing at all times. Space should be thoroughly cleaned after every use. **Should** follow **Best Practices** for Indoor Events.



LECTURES / PRESENTATIONS / GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Reduce equipment used. If materials are handed out, employee should deliver to each participant instead of being passed around. If possible, single use pens and pencils should be used.



ARTS & CRAFTS

Use single use arts and crafts supplies that can be disposed of after the activity.

SENIOR CENTERS



BILLIARDS

Limit to 2 players. Thoroughly clean equipment (cue sticks and balls) after each use.



COOKING DEMONSTRATIONS

Samples served in single-use containers with disposable utensils.



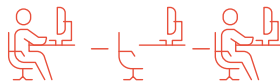
FITNESS

Should follow Best Practices for Sports/Fitness Centers



MOVIES

Should follow Best Practices for Indoor Recreation.



COMPUTER CLASS

Limit to alternating seats and clean equipment after each use.



BINGO

Limit to 1 player per table, unless table is large enough to maintain 6 ft of social distancing. Use single-use cards with bingo markers. Do not allow trading of bingo cards and remove bingo chips.



GROUP TRAVEL

Should follow Best Practices for Senior Centers – Transportation and the relevant Sector Rules for the destinations of group travel activities.



COHORTS

It is encouraged to build cohorts for group activities.

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MASKS

Masks must be worn during transportation.



CAR

Limit to 1 passenger or only members of one immediate household.



BUS

Limit to 1 passenger or only members of one immediate household per row.



PERSONAL PROTECTION

Face coverings shall be worn for individuals traveling to and from the venue, and walking in and out of the venue.



CLEANING & DISINFECTION

Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces after each use.

- Door handles, handrails, seatbelts



WHEELCHAIR ASSISTANCE

Gloves are strongly recommended for employees assisting participants with wheelchairs. Employees should use hand sanitizer after each participant is assisted.



DAILY HEALTH CHECK

Prior to transportation, ask participants 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
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Fatigue

Participants should stay home if sick.

SENIOR CENTERS

PERSONAL PROTECTION FOR EMPLOYEES

- All employees are required to wear a facemask or other cloth face covering that completely covers the nose and mouth. Employees that cannot wear a mask due to a medical condition must provide documentation to their employer. **It is strongly recommended that those who cannot wear a mask due to a medical condition not work at this time given the vulnerable population.**
- 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.

EMPLOYERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING PERSONAL PROTECTION TO THEIR EMPLOYEES

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

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

Participants are required to bring and wear facemasks or cloth face coverings that completely cover the nose and mouth. Participants who cannot wear a mask or face covering should be offered opportunities to participate in virtual services. Participants do not need to wear a mask while engaged in physical activity and are at least 12 ft away from the nearest person. Masks shall be worn as they enter and exit the facilities and use the restrooms.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR ACTIVITY INSTRUCTORS

Instructors are required to wear a facemask or cloth face covering that completely covers the nose and mouth. Instructors do not need to wear a cloth face covering during classes if they are partaking in physical activity as long as 12 ft of distance can be maintained.

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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, &/OR DISPOSABLE DISINFECTANT WIPES

Make available near commonly used surfaces, where possible, e.g.:

- Machinery and equipment
- Free weights
- Bathrooms



SHARED BATHROOMS

Clean and disinfect frequently, and 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 wastebasket outside of the bathroom



INTRADAY CLEANING

Employees shall clean all equipment frequently, and customers must wipe down equipment after each use. This includes free weights.



CLEANING & DISINFECTING

Follow federal guidelines (CDC, EPA) on what specific products shall 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 should be used cautiously.
- Avoid all food contact surfaces when using disinfectants; these surfaces should be sanitized instead.
- 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 and exits
- Payment devices (e.g. PIN pad)
- Water bottle refill stations

SENIOR CENTERS



DAILY HEALTH CHECK

Ask employees and participants 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
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Fatigue

Employees and participants 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 in the event of a positive case, and follow CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting.

- Additional information can be accessed at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html>



WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

Employers may not retaliate against workers for raising concerns about COVID-19 related safety and health conditions.

- Additional information for the public sector can be accessed at www.connosha.com
- Additional information can be accessed at www.whistleblowers.gov



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>