

VDH GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS

MAINTAINING A HEALTHY FACILITY AND PREVENTING COVID-19

The following public health recommendations apply to general business (**non-healthcare**) settings in Virginia. For more detailed guidance and requirements for specific settings, please see the [VDH Website](#) and also [CDC guidance](#).



Encourage vaccination.

Encourage all employees and patrons to stay [up to date](#) on their COVID-19 vaccines by going to [Vaccinate.Virginia.gov](#) or calling 1-877-VAX-IN-VA. Where feasible, consider paid time off or other incentives to allow employees to attend vaccination appointments.



Monitor COVID-19 hospital admission levels to guide COVID-19 prevention efforts.

[COVID-19 hospital admission levels](#) provide information about local COVID-19 trends. Businesses and organizations may consider monitoring this information and reviewing CDC's suggested prevention measures. Hospital admission levels are categorized as "**high**," "**medium**," or "**low**." For example, all people (such as employees of the business) are recommended to be **up to date** with COVID-19 vaccinations **regardless** of the hospital admission level. If the hospital admission level is **high**, CDC recommends that everyone aged **2 years** and older wear a **high-quality mask** or respirator in **indoor** public settings. CDC recommendations are **not** mandates and businesses/organizations can decide what steps, if any, they wish to take.



Promote frequent hand washing.

Promote frequent and thorough **hand washing** by providing employees and patrons entering the space with a place to wash their hands. If soap and running water are not immediately available, provide hand sanitizers for customers and staff, particularly at entry and exit points. Further hand hygiene guidance can be found on the [CDC website](#).



Practice routine cleaning (and disinfect if needed).

Follow [CDC guidance](#) for cleaning and disinfecting the facility or space. Surfaces frequently touched by multiple people, such as door handles, desks, phones, light switches, and faucets, should be cleaned at least once per day.

Consider cleaning more often or using an [EPA-approved disinfectant](#) to disinfect (in addition to cleaning) in high traffic areas, when indoor [ventilation](#) is poor, when people are not regularly washing hands, or if the space is used by [people at increased risk of severe COVID-19](#). In those situations, disinfecting wipes could be used at least once per day. If patrons wish to wipe down surfaces more often, wipes should be made available to them. If there has been a sick person or someone who tested positive for COVID-19 in the facility within the **last 24 hours**, high-touch areas should be disinfected, in addition to cleaning the space. Ensure cleaning staff are trained on proper use of cleaning and disinfecting products available in the facility. VDH and CDC do **not** recommend foggers for disinfection of COVID-19, since there is insufficient evidence to support their use in businesses, their potential benefits do not outweigh potential harms, and conventional cleaning and disinfection methods are safer and proven effective.



Encourage employees to self-monitor.

Employees should be instructed to self-monitor for any COVID-19 **signs** or **symptoms** before reporting to work. A list of [COVID-19 symptoms](#) and a **self-checker** tool are provided [on the CDC website](#).

Develop or adopt flexible sick leave policies to ensure that sick employees do not report to work if they have [COVID-19 symptoms](#) or a positive COVID-19 test. Regardless of vaccination status, COVID-19 testing is recommended for all people with symptoms of the illness.

Some employees are at [higher risk for severe illness](#) from COVID-19. Employers should take particular care to reduce their risk of exposure while making sure to be compliant with relevant Americans with Disabilities Act (**ADA**) and Age Discrimination in Employment Act (**ADEA**) regulations. Consider offering vulnerable employees duties that minimize their contact with customers and other employees, if agreed to by the employee. Consider offering and/or supporting options to telework for employees at [higher risk for severe illness](#). The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission enforces several workplace anti-discrimination laws and provides [information about COVID-19](#).



Incorporate ventilation as a mitigation strategy.

Proper ventilation practices and interventions can greatly **reduce** the airborne concentrations of the virus that causes COVID-19 inside a building. See [VDH Ventilation Best Practices](#) and [CDC guidance](#) for more information on using ventilation as a strategy to help reduce COVID-19 transmission in buildings.

For more information please see the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry's [Guidance for Employers to Mitigate the Risk of COVID-19 to Workers](#).