

April 6, 2020

## Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19): Guidance for Essential (Non-Healthcare) Workers on How to Stay Safe in the Workplace

This guidance document is for all essential workers who must work during the COVID-19 pandemic. This guidance document is not for health care workers, Fire and EMS personnel, or law enforcement. Below is a list of recommendations that essential workers should follow to help protect themselves and other members of the community.

The use of gloves and respirators (sometimes called N95s) is not recommended for those not having direct contact with sick patients and should be preserved for health care workers. Medical masks (sometimes called surgical or procedure masks) can be used but use of store-bought fabric (non-medical) masks or homemade masks is also sufficient. See the [Guidance about Masks and Other Face Coverings for the General Public](#) for additional information.

### All essential workers should have consistent access to:

- Sinks supplied with soap and water
- Tissues and lined trash receptacles
- Store-bought alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol
- Disinfectant spray or wipes

All essential workers who are not required or instructed to wear respirators and/or medical masks for their job are encouraged to wear [non-medical masks](#).

### Essential personnel can take the following steps to keep themselves and others safe while working:

- Stop handshaking – use other noncontact methods of greeting
- Clean hands at the door and schedule regular hand washing reminders
- Create habits and reminders to avoid touching their faces and cover coughs and sneezes
- Wear cloth face coverings and wash or replace them depending on the frequency of use
- Disinfect surfaces regularly such as:
  - doorknobs
  - tables
  - desks
  - handrails
  - keyboards
  - computer mouse
  - phones
  - any other high-touch surfaces
- Increase ventilation by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning
- Use video or phone conferencing for meetings when possible
  - When not possible,
    - hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces
    - arrange staggered seating that allows for 6 feet of distance between each person as much as possible
- Postpone or cancel large meetings or gatherings
- Assess the risks of travel for work
- Stay home if sick
  - Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and follow DC Health guidelines posted on <https://coronavirus.dc.gov/>

**Additional considerations for:**

Outreach, caseworkers, shelter service workers

- Wear gloves only if you need to handle a client's personal belongings (i.e. clothing). Documents, money, and writing utensils can be handled without gloves. Maintain good hand hygiene by washing your hands with soap and water or using hand sanitizer on a regular basis.
- Keep at least 6 feet of distance when meeting with or visiting clients.
- If you have to conduct a home visit, remain outside the home initially and ask if anyone is sick in the home.
  - If someone in the home is sick, then complete the visit by remaining outside or reschedule the home visit.