

COVID-19 Guidance for Breakrooms



Arrange the room to ensure distancing

- Rearrange the room to maintain a distance of at least six feet apart, including marking the spatial separation.
- Change workflows so that only 1-2 employees are in the break room at a time.
- Switch the break area to a larger room to accommodate more people while maintaining 6-foot distancing.
- Post signs that indicate the maximum number allowed in the room together.
- Remove extra seating so that only the permissible number of people can be seated.
- Sit as far away from others as you can, and minimize talking, as talking while unmasked and eating or drinking can increase spread.
- Provide supplies so employees can easily clean and disinfect spaces after use.

Wash your hands often

Wash your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub:

- When you enter the break area.
- Before and after removing your mask.
- Before eating.
- After putting your mask on again.
- Before leaving from break area.

Wear a mask unless eating

- Wear a mask in the break room unless you are actively eating; this means wear it while you're heating up food or washing up after.
- Wash your hands after handling your mask.

Clean and disinfect after your break

- Disinfect your table space, chair, and food preparation area after each use.
- Facilities should ensure each break area is cleaned at least once per shift, including the microwave, countertops, table top, chair seats and backs, and high-touch areas (e.g., door handles). Cleaning should be done on a schedule and assigned. Document these cleanings in a log to ensure they are happening at regularly scheduled intervals.

Check-up and refresh

Routine, documented check-ups should be done to ensure that this guidance is being followed and refresh these tips with staff as needed.

Why is this so important?

Good prevention behaviors in the classroom, sales floor, and other public-facing spaces can be undone if employees are still gathering in break areas. Below are just a few examples from our contact tracers' notes:

- Staff are required to wear cloth face masks and distance as much as possible, but staff do eat in the break room and are not required to eat alone.
- Coworker tested positive, so person got tested to be safe. Said he was never in contact with said coworker except being in the same break room for lunch.
- Person reports exposure may have been from colleagues at job where distancing practices around staff break room are minimal and unenforced.
- Coworkers eat together in break room with no masks.
- Person exposed at work via close contact in break room while eating.