

Public Health Tips for Properly Reopening Your Business

Would an inspection be required to reopen?

Public Health Madison & Dane County will not be requiring an inspection for restaurants or other licensed establishments to reopen.

What should I do prior to opening?

- Call to turn on any services shut off including electricity, water and trash collection.
- Review [Water Quality and Your Business: Tips for Re-opening After Closure](#) to ensure your water is safe to use.
- Run water through all pipes for several minutes to check for leaks and remove stagnant water
- Perform an assessment of physical facility including checking for:
 - Pest activity – check for pest droppings or physical damage to facility
 - Mold growth due to changes in humidity and HVAC
 - Structural problems – broken windows, ripped screens, cracked tiles, plumbing leaks
 - Test the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
 - Check the HVAC system and put in a new filter
- Thoroughly clean all surfaces and equipment that has not been used. See [CDC cleaning guidelines](#).
- Review with employees [COVID-19 symptoms](#) and when they must stay home. See Public Health's [guidance for workers](#) document.

I'm a food operator. Are there additional things I should do?

- Discard any foods that have expired, toss any foods that were inadvertently left uncovered or unsealed, and discard any foods that show signs of pest invasion.
- Ensure all coolers and freezers are maintaining temperatures before stocking with perishable items. (Turn on coolers and freezers for at least one day, if they have been turned off, prior to restocking.)
- Check that dishwashers and other sanitizing solutions are at the proper concentrations.
- Test dishwasher or sanitizing solutions concentrations throughout the day.
- Wash all dishes, utensils, and pots that have been sitting out collecting dust.
- See [Public Health's website](#) for other factsheets and posters to print out for education.

How do I reopen without causing secondary wave of infections?

We recommend the following steps to help:

- Develop an employee illness plan.
- Have employees sign an [Employee Illness Agreement](#).
- Continue having employees self-monitor their temperature and symptoms every day prior to working. If employees are out sick, use [Public Health's Illness Log](#) to track illnesses.
- Continue social distancing. See our [Social Distancing Poster](#) and [Social Distancing Guidance for Businesses](#).
- Have staff wear cloth face coverings. See [our factsheet](#) and [CDC recommendations](#) for wearing cloth face covering.
- Implement glove usage if appropriate. See [our glove usage guidance document](#).
- Develop a plan for heightened cleaning of frequently touched areas. See [CDC cleaning guidelines](#).
- Ensure all handwash sinks are stocked with soap, single use toweling, and tempered water.
- Consider temporarily decreasing establishment customer capacity when in-person sales are allowed.

More Resources

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19 among customers and staff, personnel should feel free to print out some of our factsheets and review the following links:

- Public Health Madison & Dane County: [Requirements for Businesses & Workplaces](#)
- Wisconsin Department of Health Services: [COVID-19 Businesses, Employers, and Workers](#)
- CDC: [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#)

Water Quality and Your Business: Tips for Reopening After Closure

Make Sure Your Building's Water System and Devices Are Safe to Use

Disinfectant may quickly dissipate from stagnant water inside of an unused building, leaving plumbing susceptible to the growth of biofilm bacteria and potential pathogens such as Legionella. A decrease in hot water temperature to 77-108°F (25-42°C) may allow the growth of Legionella. When water is stagnant, there is also the potential that heavy metals and pathogens may build up in the pipes.

Sediment, temperature, age, and residual (STAR) are four important factors affecting water quality in premise plumbing. To optimize building water quality:

- Keep cold water cold, and hot water hot.
- Flush to waste any rusty, discolored or smelly water
- Reduce water age with periodic flushing (replace all water inside building pipes with fresh water)
- Flush pipes to refresh the water supply and restore an adequate disinfectant residual

Flushing the Building

To prepare your building for reopening, the first action is to flush the entire building ([See step 3 below in the 8 Step Plan](#)), including all water-using appliances like ice machines, humidifiers, and dishwashers. Flushing will clear out the potentially contaminated water that has accumulated in plumbing and replace it with fresh water. The fresh water will help mitigate the problems (loss of protective scale and biofilm growth) that occurred while the water was not being used.

If staff are not knowledgeable about how the plumbing in the building works or flushing methods, consider contacting a plumber for help. Inspect any mechanical equipment that uses water, such as cooling towers, boilers, pumps, backflow preventers, etc., and determine if they are functioning properly. Clean shower heads, faucets and other fixtures that can produce aerosols that people could inhale. If your building serves a high-risk population (young children, elderly, or immune compromised) and there is a Legionella or heavy metal concern, consider collecting a water sample to be tested if your water is discolored, smells, or tastes funny.

8-Step Plan for Preparing Your Building for Reopening

[See CDC's Plan](#)

- 1. Develop a comprehensive water management program (WMP) for your water system and all devices that use water. Guidance to help with this process is available from CDC and others.**

- **Water Management Program Toolkit:** This [toolkit](#) is designed to help people understand which buildings and devices need a *Legionella* water management program to reduce the risk of Legionnaires' disease, what makes a good program, and how to develop it.
- **Preventing Legionnaires' Disease: A Training on *Legionella* Water Management Programs:** Take this [training from CDC](#) and partners on creating a water management program to reduce risk of Legionnaires' disease.
- **Hotel Guidance:** [Considerations for Hotel Owners and Managers: How to Prevent Legionnaires' Disease.](#)
- **Operating Public Hot Tubs for pool staff and owners:** [Guidance for Operating Hot Tubs.](#)
- **Healthcare Facilities:** Water management programs in healthcare facilities are an important way to help protect vulnerable patient populations as well as staff and visitors. See the [CDC Guidance From Plumbing to Patients](#).
- **Preventing Occupational Exposure to *Legionella*:** The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has a [factsheet on Preventing Occupational Exposure to Legionella](#) in workplaces.

2. Ensure your water heater is properly maintained and the temperature is correctly set.

- Determine if your manufacturer recommends draining the water heater after a prolonged period of disuse. Ensure that all maintenance activities are carried out according to the manufacturer's instructions or by professionals.
- Make sure that your water heater is set to at least 120°F. Do not turn the heater off as water temperature is important to prevent microorganisms from growing in the water heater and being aerosolized.
- Higher temperatures can further reduce the risk of *Legionella* growth, but ensure that you take measures to prevent scalding if you water heater is set to >130°F.

3. Flush your water system.

- Disconnect hoses and close valves to prevent backflow or siphoning of contaminants back into plumbing.
- Flush hot and cold water through all points of use (e.g., showers, sink faucets)
 - Flushing may need to occur in segments (e.g., floors or individual rooms) due to facility size and water pressure. The purpose of building flushing is to replace ALL water inside building piping with fresh water.
 - Flush building zone by zone. The first zone to be flushed should be the one nearest the building supply and then working outward from the supply.
 - Cold water lines should be flushed before hot water.
 - Remove all aerators from faucets before turning on water.

- Run water through all outlets. Parts of the water system most important to flush to prevent sickness are: Drinking fountains, ice machines, refrigerators with ice machines, faucets used for drinking water or food preparation, kitchen sink sprayers, and showers.
- Flush until the hot water reaches its maximum temperature.
- Run water through each line for a minimum of 10 minutes.
- Replace all point-of-use filters, including filters in appliances like a refrigerator.

4. Clean all decorative water features, such as fountains.

- Be sure to follow any recommended manufacturer guidelines for cleaning.
- Ensure that decorative water features are free of visible slime or biofilm.
- After the water feature has been re-filled, measure disinfectant levels to ensure that the water is safe for use.

5. Ensure hot tubs/spas are safe for use.

- Check for existing guidelines from your local or state regulatory agency before use.
- Ensure that hot tubs/spas are free of visible slime or biofilm before filling with water.
- Perform a hot tub/spa disinfection procedure before use: [CDC Guidance](#) (start at Step 4).

6. Ensure cooling towers are clean and well-maintained.

- Ensure that cooling towers are maintained (including start-up and shut-down procedures) per manufacturer's guidelines and industry best practices
- Ensure that the tower and basin are free of visible slime or biofilm before use
 - If the tower appears well-maintained, perform an online disinfection procedure.
 - [Guidance on disinfection procedures](#) from the Cooling Technology Institute.

7. Ensure safety equipment including fire sprinkler systems, eye wash stations, and safety showers are clean and well-maintained. Regularly flush, clean, and disinfect these systems according to manufacturers' specifications.

8. Maintain your water system.

- Consider contacting your local water utility to learn about any recent disruptions in the water supply. This could include working with the local water utility to ensure that standard checkpoints near the building or at the meter to the building have recently been checked or request that disinfectant residual entering the building meets expected standards.

- After your water system has returned to normal, ensure that the risk of *Legionella* growth is minimized by regularly checking water quality parameters such as temperature, pH, and disinfectant levels.
- Follow your water management program, document activities, and promptly intervene when problems arise.

For more details see the [guidance](#) developed by the CDC to help businesses safely reopen after being closed for an extended period or contact your local municipality water utility if you have further questions.

COVID-19 & Reopening your Business to Curbside Drop-off Pick-up

Keeping workers and our community safe is most important as we incrementally phase in services after COVID-19 closure. By opening up services strategically and incrementally, we can continue to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and keep staff and others safe.

What are the requirements for businesses when reopening?

See the [Requirements for Businesses & Workplace page](#) for details.

What is recommended for curbside drop-off and pick-up?

Curbside pick-up and drop-off of goods or animals for the purpose of having those goods or animals serviced, repaired, or cared for by the business is allowed. When performing curbside drop-off and pick-up, the following are recommended:

- All operations for curbside pickup must follow physical distancing requirements.
- Consider having customers order online or by phone for curbside pick-up.
- Drop-offs or pick-ups must be scheduled to ensure social distancing.
- Goods can be pre-packaged by the manufacturer, distributor, or store.
- Consider scheduling drop-offs or pick-ups to ensure social distancing.
- Don't require customer signature when possible.
- Business and workers must comply with the following:
 - Maintain 6 feet between people. Workers must comply with Social Distancing Requirements per Forward Dane.
 - Frequently wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer.
 - Cover coughs or sneezes into sleeve or elbow (not hands).
 - Regularly clean high-touch surfaces (doorknobs, handles, tabletops) using [CDC cleaning guidelines](#).
 - Do not shake hands.
 - Follow all other [DHS](#) and the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control](#) public health recommendations.

What other public health best practices are recommended for curbside drop-off and pick-up?

- When scheduling pick-up times, ask for a description of vehicle or other pick-up details.

- Have worker wash hands and/or sanitize both immediately prior to and after drop-offs or pick-ups.
- Consider having workers wear a face covering. See [our factsheet](#) and [CDC recommendations](#).
- Have workers wear gloves for handling materials (e.g. when packaging for pick-up).
- Instruct customers to remain in their vehicle, open their trunk, and have worker remove or place items in trunk to avoid contact, or designate a drop-off or pick-up area or table.
- Post signs where drop-off or pick-up is to occur reminding customers to remain in vehicle, and windows up to promote physical distancing. For customers not in automobiles, consider other ways to handle drop-off or pick-up without having customer contact (i.e. text message, table with labeled bag for on-foot pick-up). See our [Physical Distancing Poster](#) and [Physical Distancing Guidance for Businesses](#).
- Reuse of plastic bags or packaging material is discouraged at this time.

What are the recommendations for cleaning in the workplace?

- Perform daily environmental cleaning using [EPA-approved disinfectants](#). Read the sanitizer label and follow usage directions. Be sure to measure the concentration of the sanitizer with test strips to make sure the active ingredient is available.
- All surfaces such as equipment, counters, tables, chairs, bathrooms, and doors should be cleaned as needed and sanitized often. Wash, rinse, and sanitize high touch surfaces more frequently throughout the day.

What personal hygiene practices are recommended for workers?

- All workers shall perform proper hand hygiene upon first arriving to work, after the restroom, before and after eating, and frequently throughout the day followed by an approved alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Wash hands and/or sanitize both immediately prior to delivery service and after any interaction with others. If servicing multiple clients, make sure to wash your hands in-between clients.
- All workers shall wash their hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Make sure each handwashing station is stocked with soap, paper towels, and warm, running water.
- Even with proper handwashing, workers should consider using an additional barrier such gloves to prevent direct hand contact with potentially contaminated items. See our [glove fact sheet](#) for guidance.

- All workers shall cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. If a tissue is not available, workers can sneeze into their shirtsleeve, but not into their hands. Discard tissues into a lined garbage bin and wash hands immediately with soap and water after each cough or sneeze.
- Remind workers to avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth to help slow the spread of germs.
- When not performing services, practice social distancing and maintain 6 feet or greater from clients and other employees, as much as feasibly possible.

What does Public Health recommend regarding employee illness policies?

- All employees should self-monitor prior to reporting to work. Self-monitoring requires an assessment of your overall health. Monitor whether you have a fever, cough, or shortness of breath, or have been exposed to someone diagnosed with COVID-19. All employees should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick. Review your sick leave policies and expand upon paid leave options for your workers, if possible. See Public Health Madison & Dane County [Guidelines for Workers](#).
- Employees that have been exposed and are self-quarantining for 14 days must complete the full 14-day quarantine from the date of last exposure, and be symptom-free before returning to work.
- If an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and will not have a test to see if they are still contagious, all of the following criteria must be met before they can leave their home and return to work:
 - No fever for at least 72 hours (3 days) without the use of fever-reducing medication
 - Other symptoms have improved
 - It has been at least 10 days since they started to feel sick
- If you have employees at higher risk for coronavirus such as people 60 or older, people with underlying health conditions (heart disease, lung disease, or diabetes) or those with weakened immune systems or those who are pregnant, it is highly recommended to assign them to non-public-contact duties.

How can we prevent the spread of COVID-19 among workers and our community?

- Pre-screen worker's temperature and assess symptoms prior to them starting work.
- Ensure social distancing at workplace to the extent possible.
- Perform heightened cleaning and disinfecting of all work spaces.
- Implement glove usage if appropriate. See our [glove fact sheet](#) for guidance.

- All workers are highly encouraged to wear a cloth face covering at all times while at work to slow the spread of COVID-19. This is especially important if there has been a COVID-19 exposure at your workplace. To support this at your workplace:
 - Create a policy for cloth face coverings at your business.
 - Require laundering of reusable face coverings before each daily use.
 - Implement the additional information from CDC on the use of face coverings, including washing instructions and information on how to make homemade face covers.
 - Remember the cloth face coverings recommended by CDC are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance. See the Wisconsin Department of Health Services for more information under the “Should I wear a cloth face mask?” section.
 - See [our factsheet](#) and [CDC recommendations](#) for wearing cloth face covering.