



COMMON AREAS

Public health best practices

Communication of public health best practices to employees and users of common areas

Identify platforms such as email, websites, hotlines, automated text messaging, newsletters, and flyers to help communicate information on:

- Physical distancing (see CDC guidance on [Physical \(social\) Distancing](#))
- How COVID-19 is spread, [symptoms](#), and how to stay healthy
- When and how to wash hands (See CDC guidance on [Handwashing](#))
- Cloth face covering (PHMDC Factsheet on [Cloth Face Coverings](#))
- The current [Dane County Orders](#) and [Forward Dane](#)

Post signage in high traffic areas and other places where physical distancing is difficult:

- Signage indicating that cloth face coverings are highly recommended in common areas
- Signage indicating that cloth face coverings are required in elevators and restrooms
- Guidance and directives from state and local officials
- See posters and other communication on [CDC website here](#) and also [here](#) that can be used in your facility.
- Ensure all communication addresses any potential language, cultural, and disability barriers. The CDC has resources on their website in many languages.

Public health best practices for common spaces to prevent the spread of covid-19 in your facility

- Consider how you can use multiple strategies to practice physical distancing between everyone in common spaces of the facility.
- Consider cancelling all public or non-essential group activities and events.
- Offer alternative methods for activities and social interaction such as participation by phone, online, or through recorded sessions.
- Arrange seating of chairs and tables to be least 6 feet apart in shared spaces.
- Alter schedules to promote physical distancing, such as staggering breaks, meal and activity times.
- Form small groups that regularly participate at the same times and do not mix.
- Ensure that physical distancing can be maintained in shared rooms, such as television, game, or exercise rooms.
- If physical distancing is difficult to implement in some common areas, such as elevators or stairwells, wearing of cloth face coverings is required.
- Make sure that shared rooms in the facility have good air flow from an air conditioner or an opened window.

- Consider working with building maintenance staff to determine if the building ventilation system can be modified to increase ventilation rates or the percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system.
- [Clean and disinfect](#) shared areas (laundry facilities, elevators, shared kitchens, exercise rooms, dining rooms) and frequently touched surfaces using [EPA-registered disinfectant](#)  more than once a day if possible.

Cleaning and Disinfection of Common Spaces

- Consider how you can use multiple strategies to maintain [physical \(social\) distance](#) between everyone in common spaces of the facility.
- Consider cancelling all public or non-essential group activities and events.
- Offer alternative methods for activities and social interaction such as participation by phone, online, or through recorded sessions.
- Arrange seating of chairs and tables to be least 6 feet (2 meters) apart during shared meals or other events.
- Alter schedules to reduce mixing and close contact, such as staggering meal and activity times and forming small groups that regularly participate at the same times and do not mix.
- Ensure that physical distancing can be maintained in shared rooms, such as television, game, or exercise rooms.
- [Clean and disinfect](#), using following CDC guidelines, shared areas (laundry facilities, elevators, shared kitchens, exercise rooms, dining rooms) and frequently touched surfaces using EPA approved cleaners at least twice a day, or more if possible.

Considerations for Specific Communal Rooms in Your Facility

General Considerations:

- Ensure that shared rooms in the facility have good air flow or work with building maintenance staff to determine if the building ventilation system can be modified.
- Increase frequency of cleaning.
- Provide hand sanitizer in these areas.
- Post signage on capacity limits.
- Provide no-touch garbage cans.
- Remove all unnecessary touchpoints, especially those that cannot be sanitized including all magazines, newspapers, service menus, and unnecessary decor.

Shared kitchens, dining rooms, and break rooms

- Restrict the number of people allowed in the kitchen and dining room at one time so that everyone can stay at least 6 feet (2 meters) apart from one another.
- Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, or eating utensils.
- Non-disposable food service items used should be handled with gloves and washed with dish soap and hot water or in a dishwasher.
- [Wash hands](#) after handling used food service items.
- Use gloves when removing garbage bags and handling and disposing of trash.

Laundry rooms

- Maintain access and adequate supplies to laundry facilities to help prevent spread of COVID-19.
- Restrict the number of people allowed in laundry rooms at one time to ensure everyone can stay at least 6 feet apart.
- Ensure disposable gloves, soap and single-use towels for washing hands, and EPA approved disinfectants are available for use
- Have staff clean and disinfect buttons, knobs, and handles of laundry machines, laundry baskets, and shared laundry items.
- Post [guidelines](#) for doing laundry such as washing instructions and handling of dirty [laundry](#).

Recreational areas such as activity rooms and exercise rooms

- Consider closing activity rooms or restricting the number of people allowed in at one time to ensure everyone can stay at least 6 feet apart.
- Consider closing exercise rooms.
- Activities and sports (e.g., ping pong, basketball, chess) that require close contact are not recommended.
- Perform more frequent cleaning of high touch areas.
- Have cleaning supplies (wipes) available for use

Shared bathrooms

- Post signage requiring cloth face coverings when using restrooms.
- Shared bathrooms should be cleaned regularly using EPA approved disinfectants at least twice per day (e.g., in the morning and evening or after times of heavy use).
- Make sure bathrooms are continuously stocked with soap and single-use paper towels. Hand sanitizer could also be made available.
- Use no-touch garbage cans. Make sure trash cans are emptied regularly and cleaned.
- Provide information on how to wash hands properly.
- Educate that sinks and counter tops could be source of infection and that users should avoid placing personal items directly on counter tops and other surfaces in the bathroom.

Waiting rooms, reception desks

- Limit number of visitors/clients at any given time to [Forward Dane](#) limits
- Install physical barriers such as clear, plastic sneeze shields at reception areas or between work stations
- Remove extra chairs in waiting areas to allow people to remain six feet apart when possible
- Consider having clients or visitors wait in their cars for a text or call when it's their turn to enter
- Eliminate self-serve water, coffee, candy dishes, shared snacks or potluck style food activities
- Use tape or other markings on the floor or footprint graphics to show clients and visitors where to stand

Elevators & Stairwells

- Wear cloth face coverings in elevators and stairwells

- *CDC recommends the wearing of cloth face coverings for “public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, especially in areas of significant community-based transmission”*
- Minimize traffic in enclosed spaces, such as elevators and stairwells.
- Limit the number of individuals in an elevator at one time.
- Consider only riding elevators with own party.
- Post signage with occupancy limits and that masks are required.
- Clean and disinfect elevators buttons and other frequently touched surfaces several times during the day.
- Designate one directional stairwells, if possible.
- Clean and disinfect door handles, hand rails, and other frequently touched surfaces in stairwells.
- Post signage indicating if stairwells are one directional and that masks should be worn.
- Provide tape, chalk or other means of marking floors/ground in high traffic areas to show people where to stand when waiting (e.g., elevators, reception area)

Additional resources to help implement best practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Public Health Madison & Dane County has designed a [Business Toolkit](#) and our [webpage](#) has additional information.
- Public Health Madison & Dane County [Forward Dane Reopening Plan](#)
- [CDC Activities and Initiatives Supporting the COVID-19 Response and the President’s Plan for Opening America Up Again](#)
- Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation [WEDC Reopening Guidelines](#)