

STRATEGIES IN YOUR ESTABLISHMENT TO PROMOTE PHYSICAL (SOCIAL) DISTANCING

While it is difficult to completely eliminate the risk of exposure, a combination of protective measures will offer the most protection for those working in a building, and also for customers, visitors and clients. The best combination of controls to protect from exposure to COVID-19 are physical distancing policies, heightened hygiene practices, HVAC controls, and PPE.

Business should take steps to limit the amount of traffic in their offices, retail stores and/or restaurants, which should include a variety of strategies to reduce the spread of COVID-19 among customers and staff. One of the most important keys to stopping the spread of COVID-19 is physical distancing. Employers are required to have a written [policy for physical distancing](#) and use it to train their staff (See [PHMDC Physical Distancing guidance](#)) PHMDC has made a list of some public health best practice recommendations for physical distancing that may be helpful to implement at your facility.

Some recommendations to consider include:

Work policies and procedures

- Develop or update your [policy on physical distancing](#) and review with employees
- To the greatest extent feasible, comply with Physical Distancing Requirements between all individuals on the premises, including but not limited to employees, customers, and members of the public
- Limit in-person meetings, and use other means of communications such as Zoom, Skype, and email, that are not in person
- Restrict the number of workers present on premises to no more that is strictly necessary to perform services.
- Implement flexible work schedules. Stagger break and lunch times, shift start and end times
- Promote flexible/remote work schedules to reduce number of employees in the office at any one time
- No hand shaking, high fives, or other direct person-to-person contact

Occupancy/capacity limits

- Limit number of visitors, clients and/or customers in the establishment at any given time to current [Forward Dane](#) phase occupancy/capacity limits
- While limiting the number of shoppers in a store at one time, it is essential that the mechanism of limiting entry does NOT create added problems such as people lining up shoulder to shoulder outside waiting for admission
- Request that only ONE person per household come to the store; there will be circumstances where a parent must bring their child, but this should be gently discouraged, to the extent possible, on social media and on communications materials
- Consider having customers and clients sign up for an arrival time
- Only clients/customers with appointments, shopping, or getting services should be allowed inside establishment
- Stagger appointments to minimize person to person contact and overlap of patient/client visits

- Clients and customers could wait in their cars until they have been notified to come into the building, so as to not congregate near the entry doors
- Hand out a number, one per vehicle, and call numbers one at a time. Numbers could be called out via loudspeaker or displayed on a board
- Direct cars to numbered parking spaces and admit one occupant per vehicle in order, one at a time. Once the store reaches capacity, allow the next vehicle's occupant to enter only once another customer leaves

Seating areas

- Close or remove waiting or lounge areas to prevent clients/customers from congregating
- Remove extra chairs and tables in dining area, waiting areas, breakrooms to allow people to remain six feet apart when possible
- Break-rooms closed to limit gatherings of employees during phase 1. Close or limit access to other common areas where employees are likely to congregate and interact.

Physical barriers and other controls

- Install physical barriers such as clear, plastic sneeze shields at checkout areas, reception areas, and work stations
- Spread out workstations so employees can remain six feet apart at all times
- Work station usage staggered, or working staff in split shifts. Cleaning should be performed between shift changes
- Space equipment at least six feet apart, with greater distancing for treadmills and other high-exertion aerobic fitness equipment
- Place physical barriers, such as plexiglass, between equipment and exercise areas to promote physical distancing
- Increase physical space between employees and customers (e.g. physical barriers such as partitions)
- Move the electronic payment terminal/credit card reader farther away from the cashier, if possible, to increase the distance between the customer and the cashier
- Encourage use of carts to facilitate physical distancing

Traffic flow

- When possible have all persons enter through one door and out a different one
- Have traffic down aisles be one way only (place signage or other markings for customers)
- Mark stairwells to be one way traffic (up or down) when more than one stairwell is available
- Establish lines to regulate entry in to establishment accordance with the occupancy restrictions with markings for patrons to stand at least six feet apart from each other while waiting
- Mark areas where customers/clients may need to wait (reception areas, checkout areas, elevators) with markers six feet apart to help preserve physical distancing

Post signage

- Use markings on the floor or footprint graphic to show customers where to stand
- Provide tape, chalk or other means of marking floors/ground in high-traffic areas to show customers where to stand when waiting
- Use signs, tape marks, or other visual cues such as decals or colored tape on the floor, placed 6 feet apart, to indicate where to stand when physical barriers are not possible
- Post signage reminding employees, visitors, clients and customers to practice physical distancing

Operational changes

- Encourage curbside pick-up
- Add online shopping
- Consider options for dine-in customers to order ahead of time to limit the amount of time spent in the establishment
- Limit/stagger times when vendors or employees are stocking shelves (consider stocking during off-peak or after operational hours), when possible, to reduce contact with customers
- Consider having supply deliveries made at times when less employees are present
- Operate on an appointment or reservation basis only
- Eliminate group appointments, to reduce the number of total clients in the establishment
- Eliminate group classes/trainings or reduce the number of total clients participating if distancing requirements can be maintained
- Consider offering dedicated shopping times for vulnerable populations (people over 60, pregnant women, and those with chronic conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease)