

## Return to Work - Space Planning Controls and Strategies

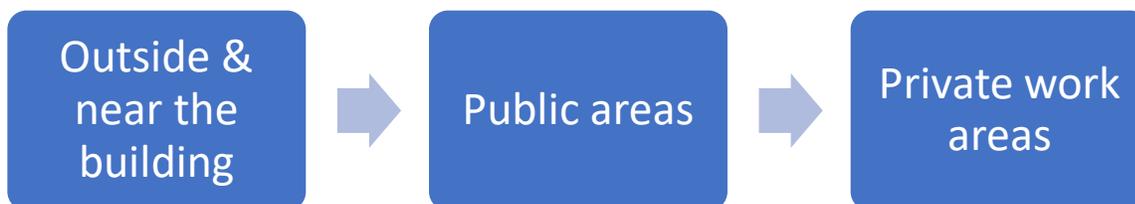
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### Guiding principles:

- Provide guidance to agencies and departments on how to adhere to and apply mandatory physical distancing requirements at the worksite to protect essential State employees and the public we serve from potential exposure to the COVID-19 virus.
- Generally, seek controls to temporarily lower the density of people working onsite while supporting continuity of business operations and increasing levels of productivity.
- Given this is temporary, keep work control interventions and any physical changes at no or low cost to the state as much as possible. Be flexible, reasonable and openminded to change.

*\*Consult OSHA, and Vermont Department of Health (VDH) guidance given the evolving situation.*

**Planning and controls start outside the building, leading into public areas, then progressively into more private work areas.**



Best temporary workplace physical distancing practices encourage a minimum planning area of 6'x 6' at 36 square/person or greater space permitting while heeding 6' apart min. distancing.[1] Follow a Phased Approach for application of these Return to Work Controls. [5b].

Consider reviewing the below work and related controls in 60, 90- and 180-days' time and Phasing as directed by the State. BGS will sunset unneeded guidance and/or add new ones as conditions change and more information becomes available in consultation with the Agency of Administration.

Note, COVID-19 short-term modifications must comply with code and other facility requirements. Those include ADA, Fire and Life-Safety, building ventilation, and cleaning/disinfecting restrictions. BGS will review any proposed changes through our normal space request process to safeguard employee safety and wellbeing.

**Possible Temporary Work and Related Controls:** The below are supplemental additions to the ACCD Work Controls from their website – authored by DOL – [COVID-19 Exposure and Control Plan](#)

#### A. OUTSIDE AND NEAR THE BUILDING:

- Temperature reading and screeners positioned.
- Visitor and staff access controls in place with physical barriers, rope-lines (use smooth surface monofilament, wipeable nylon line Where possible), 6' apart floor tape indicators to help distance those waiting for screening and entry.
- Post prominently visible signage communicating new and evolving policies and procedures.

#### B. PUBLIC FACING AREAS (whether building wide, or suite-specific)

- **Building or Suite entries:** Set-up temporary barriers helping visually enforce 6' min. distancing and access control. Control exit and entry flow in and out of building. Could be

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rope-lines (nylon wipeable, monofilament line) and tape on the floor together with in person monitoring.

- **Receptionists/Security kiosks:** Supply sneeze guard barriers and/or face-shields with cloth facemask, as possible with layout. Put 6' distance tape points in front of desks and/or kiosks.
- **Client service-counters:** Supply sneeze guard barriers and/or face shields with PPE optional. Spread out service staff and visitors > 6' apart, and/or reduce in-person service levels. Put 6' distance tape points in front of counters.
- **Waiting areas:** Temporarily remove seating and tables to allow for the remaining to be spread out providing physical distancing > 6' on center from one another. Limit number of visitors to number of seats available. To lower overall density, limit face-to-face visits by use of video meeting technology as well as appointments to manage visitor flow. This allows time to clean areas between appointments.
- **Client service areas:** Limit number of seats in smaller rooms per the referenced diagrams. Have clearer access control, limit size of family groups and service providers attending. (usually means reducing seating capacity by 50% or more.) Use alternate technologies where/when possible.
- **Shared conference, community meeting rooms, and hearing rooms:** Temporarily remove seating, spacing out remaining seats 6' apart. Minimize the need for in-person meetings and use alternative video technology where possible and available. Store chairs elsewhere. Note rooms with monitors, telepresence for adaption for mixed in-person and video meetings. When scheduling meeting space during this time, a department level safety officer must be in attendance to ensure compliance with all safety rules and requirements.
- **See below seating maximums: \***
  - **1000 SF size ± (20'x50')** = up to 22 people
  - **500 SF size ± (15'x 30')** = up to 10
  - **300 SF size ± (15'x 20')** = up to 6
  - **200 SF size ± (12'x 16')** = up to 6
  - **150 SF size ± (12'x 13')** = up to 3
  - **120 SF size ± (10'x 12')** = up to 3
  - **100 SF size ± (10'x 10')** = up to 2

\* For graphics explaining this further see: *BGS – Standard and Distanced Space Layout Examples*
- **Clinic and exam rooms:** Limit use to staff, patients and if needed to their caregiver as required. Use PPE gear for clients and service providers as suggested separately by the Vermont Department of Health (insert VDH link). Use advance screening prior to entering clinic spaces.
- **Multi-stall restrooms:** Limit number of people using based on square footage and layout. (Consider using a "Knock and wait" before entering policy where practical to limit occupancy to one at a time.)
- **Elevators:** Limit number of people traveling on elevators to 1 or max 2 person per elevator trip given small size of elevator cabs. Encourage stair use. Post signs at elevator lobbies, inside elevator cabs. (Note, an average cab internal dimension is ± 51-60" deep by 72-80" wide making physical distancing difficult.)
- **Storage carrels/cubbies:** Limit number of carrels used, possibly-use checkerboard pattern, or use alternative means to store personal items like backpacks, suitcases, strollers etc.

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- **Stairways:** Encourage their use while distancing as much as possible when using them.
- **Cafeterias/Break Rooms:** Reduce capacity by 50% or more loose chairs and tables, storing unneeded off-site temporarily. Provide 6' distance separation floor markings at checkouts, food-service pass-throughs, vending machines, refrigerators, microwaves, sinks. Consider one-way traffic patterns.
- **Hallways:** Use floor markings with one-way circulation patterns where practical. Or use clear two-way circulation where hallways or corridors are wider.
- **Other:** See note [2] below Temporary Isolation Spaces.

### C. PRIVATE WORK AREAS: (Beyond a secure or semi-secure perimeter accessed by access controls like locks or card readers)

- **Workstation areas:** Continue using 6'x 6' or 6' x 7' cubical workstations if physical distancing is able to be provided for with 6' or greater distances with layouts.
  - Avoid facing one another with a shared workstation panel.
  - Temporarily limit internal visitors to workstation areas.
  - As needed due to layout and density, consider adding temporary up-mounted see-through sneeze guard barriers between workstations, or more permanent workstation-based equipment to wall panels such as glass stacker units available from the station manufacturers.
  - Provide one-way directional markings on floor to guide flow.
  - or lastly use instead with checkerboard seating pattern to alternate users on schedules.
- **Hotel/touchdown workspaces:** Spread out seats to  $\geq 6'$  apart, remove other seats, or lastly install temporary plexiglass dividers, or more permanent glass stacker panels as possible to subdivide. When or if shared but within workstation groupings with  $> 6'$  distancing, provide enhanced cleaning supplies and mandate staff disinfect these spaces with daily use.
- **Agency/department Dedicated Meeting, conference rooms, and focus rooms:** Reduce seats greater than half or 50%, keep tables and AV equipment stacked in room or elsewhere in the facility. [2] \*
  - **1000 SF size  $\pm$  (20'x50')** = up to 22 people
  - **500 SF size  $\pm$  (15'x 30')** = up to 10
  - **300 SF size  $\pm$  (15'x 20')** = up to 6
  - **200 SF size  $\pm$  (12'x 16')** = up to 6
  - **150 SF size  $\pm$  (12'x 13')** = up to 3
  - **120 SF size  $\pm$  (10'x 12')** = up to 3
  - **100 SF size  $\pm$  (10'x 10')** = up to 2
  - **80 SF size  $\pm$  (8'x 10')** = up to 1 to 2 people
  - **42 SF size  $\pm$  (6'x 7')** = 1 person maximum

\* For graphics explaining this further see: *BGS – Standard and Distanced Space Layout Examples*
- **Private offices (single-use, or shared):** Apply min. 36 SF factor and accommodate for layouts, avoid larger meetings in offices for this temporary period:
  - 100 SF size  $\pm$  (9'x 11') = Max of 1-2 people at any time (shared or private use)
  - 120 SF size  $\pm$  (10'x 12') = Max of 1-3 people, ibid above.
  - 150 SF size  $\pm$  (10'x 15') = Max. 1-3 people, ibid above
  - 175 SF size  $\pm$  (12'x 14') = Max 1-4 people (space layout dependent)

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- **Storage rooms:** No concerns, just clean and disinfect regularly.
- **IT/Janitor Closets:** No concerns, just clean and disinfect regularly.
- **Break areas and rooms:** Reduce seating capacity by 50% and/or remove tables temporarily. Take great care at shared cupboards, sinks, refrigerators treating with cleaning and work controls outside this scope of this document. Stagger breaks and do not congregate in the break room. Do not share food and utensils. Provide 6' distance separation floor markings at checkouts, food-service pass-throughs, vending machines, refrigerators, microwaves, sinks. Consider one-way traffic patterns depending on size of space.
- **Toilets:** No comments in this guideline.
- **Breakout/lounge areas:** Reduce seating capacity by minimally 50%, enforce 6' strict physical distancing. Remove and store unused seats elsewhere.
- **Training rooms or classroom spaces:** Reduce seating capacity by 50%, keep tables in place.
- **Warehouse and shipping/receiving:** Maintain > 6' physical distancing for workers, other TBD. Provide 6' distance separation floor markings at key high-touch areas. Consider one-way traffic patterns.
- **Special-use spaces:** See note [2] below Temporary Isolation Spaces. Also, if an agency or department has special-use space not addressed above, please contact BGS Planning as noted below. Please let us know about your unique business and functional needs.

### D. Notes:

1. Six feet apart physical distancing comes from standing [VDH guidance](#). Actual implementation also depends on the specific facility with its mechanical and other engineering controls, specific building uses, other factors. Consult BGS with any questions as to application. (Physical distancing is also known as social distancing)
2. Agency and departments may need to select temporary isolation space in meeting rooms to temporarily separate an ill person from others in the workplace if they are unable to drive home. They would use this space to stay in while awaiting transportation or other services, followed by proper disinfecting and cleaning. Choose a suitable semi-confidential room for temporary usage as part of departmental emergency procedure planning.
3. This document does not include personal cleaning protocols, PPE guidance and engineering controls such as increasing air-ventilation, opening-windows, and related changes, changing air filters and so.
4. Reference sources:
  - a. [Health Resources for Businesses](#), found on the VDH COVID-19 website has links to other State of Vermont resource pages and related Federal supplemental guidance.
  - b. [Planning Considerations for Organizations in Reconstituting Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). FEMA
  - c. [BGS adapted OSHA – COVID 19 Workplace Planning and Prevention Guidelines](#)
  - d. [10 considerations for Transitioning Back to Work in a Post-COVID-19 World](#). Gensler.
  - e. [The Safe Six: Create a Workplace Readiness Plan](#). Cushman Wakefield
  - f. [04 HOK Return to Work Planning](#) HOK.

### Contact Us: \*

Have specific questions or need guidance on how best to apply these Planning Controls to your facility? Please email [BGS.Planning@Vermont.gov](mailto:BGS.Planning@Vermont.gov). Upon review of your questions or needs, BGS may ask for more information or require you to fill out a space request form following our normal space modification request and review procedures.