

# Guidelines for Safer Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic

## LIBRARIES

### Sector: Libraries

*The following is intended as a plain language summary of rules for reopening in the Green Phase and does not replace the need to follow all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.*

- **Masks**
  - Provide cloth masks for employees; however, employees are welcome to use their own cloth masks as well.
  - Require employees and visitors over age 2 to mask while on site except only:
    - As necessary for the employee to eat or drink during break times. The employee should be seated at least 6 feet from others when taking off mask.
    - When seated alone in a private office or in a cubicle whose sides extend above the head of the employee.
- **Barriers**
  - Install plastic or plexiglass barriers at information and check-out desks to physically separate staff and visitors.
    - Best practice: Issue face shields to individual staff for interactions that may be closer than 6 feet. Face shields should not be shared and do not replace the need for a mask unless there is a medical reason a mask cannot be worn.
- **Isolate**
  - It is not necessary to conduct onsite temperature measurement for staff or visitors. If you measure temperatures, use a no-touch thermometer, and do not allow anyone with a temperature of 100.4 or higher to remain onsite.
  - Have sick leave policies in place so that employees excluded from the workplace do not lose earnings.
  - If an employee develops COVID-19 infection or has a positive test, please contact the Montgomery County Office of Public Health at 610-278-5117.
- **Distance**
  - Adjust work assignments to ensure employees can stay at least 6 feet from each other and from visitors throughout their shifts and use barriers as above where this is not possible.
  - Use floor decals or other visual cues to encourage spacing by visitors.
  - Adjust seating to be at least 6 feet apart; avoid placing chairs facing each other across tables.
  - If library has a community room, block off rows and seats to require 6-foot distance between persons other than family groups.
- **Reduce crowds**
  - Limit occupancy to a maximum of 5 total staff and visitors for every 1,000 square feet of public and non-public space in the facility (a rule of thumb of 113 square feet per person is used in this calculation).
    - Post this temporary occupancy limit publicly.
  - Encourage use of e-books and online resources.
  - Avoid activities in which visitors come together in groups if they cannot remain at least 6 feet apart (story time, other group activities) and limit group size to 25 even with spacing.
- **Handwashing**
  - Place handwashing stations or hand sanitizer at entry, break rooms, and outside communal bathrooms for all staff and visitors with prominent signage promoting use.
  - Give staff hourly handwashing breaks.

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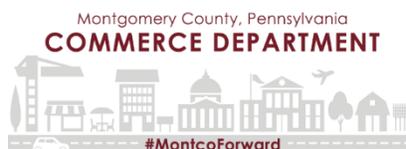
- **Clean**
  - Wipe down high-touch surfaces with disinfectant at least every 4 hours. See [CDC guidance](#) for details.
  - Keep books and other materials that cannot be safely cleaned out of circulation for at least 3 days.
  - For electronics, such as tablets, touch screens, and keyboards:
    - Put wipeable covers on electronics and clean between each user.
    - Follow manufacturer's instruction for cleaning and disinfecting.
    - If no guidance, use alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol. Dry surface thoroughly.
- **Communicate**
  - Educate staff about strategies to prevent spread of COVID-19.
  - Post prominent signs at entrances:
    - Asking people who are sick or who have had contact with someone with COVID-19 within the past 14 days not to enter.
    - Encouraging people to cover coughs or sneezes.
    - Mandating physical distancing of at least 6 feet.
    - Mandating that all staff and visitors wear masks with reminders about how to do so appropriately (staff should be encouraged to enforce this practice for visitors).

See:

[Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](#)  
[PA Guidance for Businesses Permitted to Operate during the COVID-19 Emergency](#)

*This Safety Checklist was originally developed by the City of Philadelphia Department of Public Health*

*and the Department of Commerce and adapted by the County of Montgomery.*



[Montgomery County Data Hub](#)

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610-631-3000

June 26, 2020