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Reopening: Guidance for **Small Lodging Establishments**

Guidance Document

[aiha.org](https://www.aiha.org)

Overview

Small lodging establishments including hotels, inns, and bed & breakfast businesses across the United States (U.S.) have been heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Most, if not all, were deemed “non-essential” in the U.S. by state and federal governments, resulting in employers halting operations and closing workplaces. Currently, many states are in the process of trying to re-open parts of their economies which includes some non-essential businesses. If small lodging establishments have shared spaces for dining, entertainment, leisure, they are prone to crowding; therefore, they should approach reopening with a heightened level of caution.

Small lodging establishments include but are not limited to:

- Small hotels (boutique, historic)
- Inns
- Bed & Breakfast; AirBnB, HomeAway, VRBO, etc.
- Cabins
- Hostels
- Vacation Rentals

With stay-at-home and shelter-in-place restrictions beginning to lift, owners and managers of hotels, lodges and inns are challenged with difficult questions pertaining to preparing the premises in order to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, such as:

- What measures can we enact to protect the health of employees, guests, visitors, and vendors?
- What communication do we need to keep everyone informed of the preventive steps being taken to keep everyone safe?
- What training do we need for employees?
- What limitations do we need to implement for both employees, guests, visitors, and vendors?

- How do we handle crowd management throughout the venue, including peak times?
- What precautions should we take regarding high touch interactive surfaces (e.g., counters, restrooms, common areas, doorknobs, etc.)?
- How can we ensure potential guests who are sick or have been in contact with someone COVID-19 do not stay at our facility?
- How do we effectively and safely turn over rooms?
- How do we keep common areas set up for safe physical distancing?

This document offers practical guidance for owner/manager and employee led actions in a small lodging/accommodation facility. It aims to address the key questions above by providing tips for 1) facility preparation, 2) operating procedures and 3) employee readiness.

What should an Innkeeper or Hotelier do to protect themselves, their employees, guests, visitors, and vendors?

Owners/Managers should continually monitor global (World Health Organization - WHO), federal (CDC, OSHA), state, and local guidelines for changes in recommendations, disinfection strategies, worker protections and other best management practices.

Owners/Managers should also consider developing a team of knowledgeable staff to monitor, assess, and implement new strategies as they become available. In addition, they should consider the following strategies for reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission in regards to physical distancing, ventilation, enhanced cleaning practices, restrooms, gathering areas and contact surfaces, personal hygiene, employee wellness, personal protective equipment



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(COVID-19-related protective equipment should include face coverings/masks and/or face shields for close contact activities, regular work gloves) training, waste and laundering, and communication.

Preparing the Facility for Reopening

Common Areas: Lobby, Front Desk, Concierge Desk, Shared Spaces, and Parking Services

- Common areas (e.g., lobby, check-in desk, security check-in, shared kitchens/beverage areas, restaurant/dining) should be cleaned and disinfected on a daily basis at minimum.
- Regulate the use of common areas with clear signage (including maximum occupancy) and physical distancing measures in accordance with public health rules and guidelines.
- Limit the number of guests in a common area or shared space including visitors of the guests.
- Place marks on floor wherever a line may develop to assure proper physical distancing.
- Require face covering to be worn while addressing guests and visitors.
- Provide and require staff to use hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies for touched surfaces before/after each guest has been accommodated.
- If physical distancing is not possible for front desk personnel or other staff, then partitions should be considered between staff/desks and the public.
- Disinfect all surfaces and commonly touched equipment (e.g., check-in tablets) every hour.
- Consider eliminating shared common areas for snacks, beverages (i.e. water, coffee).
- Streamline credit card processing and all transactions with guests whenever possible to limit contact.
- Remove all paper vouchers, tickets, brochures, etc. from common areas such as lobby, front desk, etc.
- Ensure Guest Arrival Document is completed at the beginning of each check-in process.
- If a guest is sick or has been around someone who is positive for COVID-19 notify management, discontinue the service and ask the guest to wait outside or in an isolated area until management can address the issue.
- Disinfect all accommodation keys returned by guests. Do not return keys to another department.

Lobby and Other Public Restrooms

- Restroom doors and stall doors should be opened and closed without touching handles, if at all possible.
- Place signs indicating that toilet lids (if present) should be closed before flushing.
- Place signs asking employees, guests, visitors, and vendors to wash hands before and after using the restroom.
- Provide paper towels and air dryers in restrooms.¹
 - The WHO and CDC currently state that hands can be dried using a paper towel or hand dryer.
 - Due to current uncertainties surrounding the transmission of SARS-CoV-2, care should be taken when using a hand dryer or paper towel.
 - The use of touch or push hand dryers is discouraged due to possible surface contamination. If hand dryers are used, consider touchless devices.
 - Businesses and employers should work with HVAC professionals to ensure that bathrooms are well ventilated.
- Common restrooms should be cleaned and disinfected frequently during the day and at closing.
- Clean and disinfect all HVAC intakes and returns daily.

¹NOTE VERSION CHANGE: In version 1 of this guidance document, in the section titled “Restrooms” it stated to disconnect or tape off the hand dryer.



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- Optimize the ventilation system in restrooms, including maximize fresh air, ensure restroom is under negative pressure and proper filtration is being used.

Housekeeping & Maintenance

- Establish safe entry into a guest room, ensure no one is in the room upon entry, if possible.
- Establish enhanced cleaning practices using the appropriate disinfectants regarding safety and effectiveness. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed a [list of products](#) that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2.
- Review product labels and Safety Data Sheets and follow manufacturer specifications. Incorporate new hazards into existing OSHA Hazard Communications Program.
- Consider consulting Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Science Professionals or industrial hygiene experts if additional advice is needed. Find a qualified industrial hygiene and OHS professionals near you in our [Consultants Listing](#).
- Establish a disinfection routine.
- Ensure disinfection protocols follow product instructions for application and contact time.
- All contact surfaces should be disinfected regularly.
- Consider developing a standard operating procedure, a checklist or audit system to consistently train on enhanced cleaning practices or to track when and how cleaning is conducted.
- Have process in place for minimizing exposure to waste (trash cans, sanitary bins, etc.).
- Have process in place for bedding, linen, towels that minimize employee exposure to used/contaminated textiles, including, but not limited to: minimizing the shaking of linens; placing soiled textiles in bags; removing soiled linens and loading washing machines; and proper laundering practices.

Launder bedding in accordance with established guidelines. (e.g., see [CDC Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting](#)).

- Take precaution when cleaning or maintaining shower, sink, and toilet (i.e. avoid creating aerosols, close toilet seat before flushing and use disposable gloves).

What should an Employee do to protect themselves and the customers?

- Educate yourself with the facts of COVID-19 from credible sources.
- If you feel unwell or have any of the symptoms associated with COVID-19– stay home. If someone at home is sick, stay home.
- Self-monitor your body temperature in the morning.
- Understand the rules – no large gatherings.
- Maintain your face covering, clean or replace frequently and use it if you are not able to maintain a 6-foot distance.
- Maintain good hygiene practices (using disposal gloves when cleaning; washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol). For more information, refer to [CDC Cleaning and Disinfection Guidelines](#))
- If you test positive for COVID-19:
 - Stay home and isolate yourself.
 - Contact your supervisor and report your results as soon as possible.
 - Notify those with whom you were commuting, had come into close contact, or were sharing tools or workspaces right away.
- Returning back to work, employee should at a minimum follow the most recent [CDC guidelines](#). **NOTE: Employer HR Policies, HIPAA guidelines, and other laws should be followed at all times.**



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Guest Communication and Expectation

- During the reservation process, advise potential guest what steps you are taking to assure their health and safety and the health and safety of your employees.
- Ask if they or anyone in their household has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Confirm with them that while on your premises they are expected to follow specific rules established to protect them, other guests and your employees from COVID-19.
- Ask guests to call 3 days before arrival and confirm that no one in their party is sick or has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Upon arrival:
 - Ask guests if they or anyone in their household has tested positive for COVID-19.
 - Monitor the body temperature of every guest.
 - Advise guests if during their stay anyone in the party feels ill, notify management immediately.
 - Advise guests of the precautions taken on the premises and their role to protect themselves, other guests, and employees, including maintaining physical distancing (including pool, beach, etc.), washing and disinfecting hands frequently, observing signs and avoiding coughing and sneezing indoors and around others. If it can't be delayed or avoided, sneeze/cough into a tissue and immediately discard and wash hands.
 - Encourage guests to wear a face covering where physical distancing is not possible. (NOTE: Home-made face coverings primarily protect others not yourself).

- Upon Departure:

- Confirm no one in the party is sick or has a temperature.
- Ask guests if they felt safe during their stay and if they have any suggestions how you can improve practices to assure health and safety.

Guest Services/Fitness Centers/Salons

For establishments with guest services, including salons, childcare, gyms, retail, please refer to the specific guidance documents for those industries on www.backtoworksafely.org.

Food Service/Restaurant/Bar

For establishments with food service, restaurants, cafes, bars, and/or shared dining spaces, please refer to the following guidance documents: Restaurants or Bars on www.backtoworksafely.org.

Resources

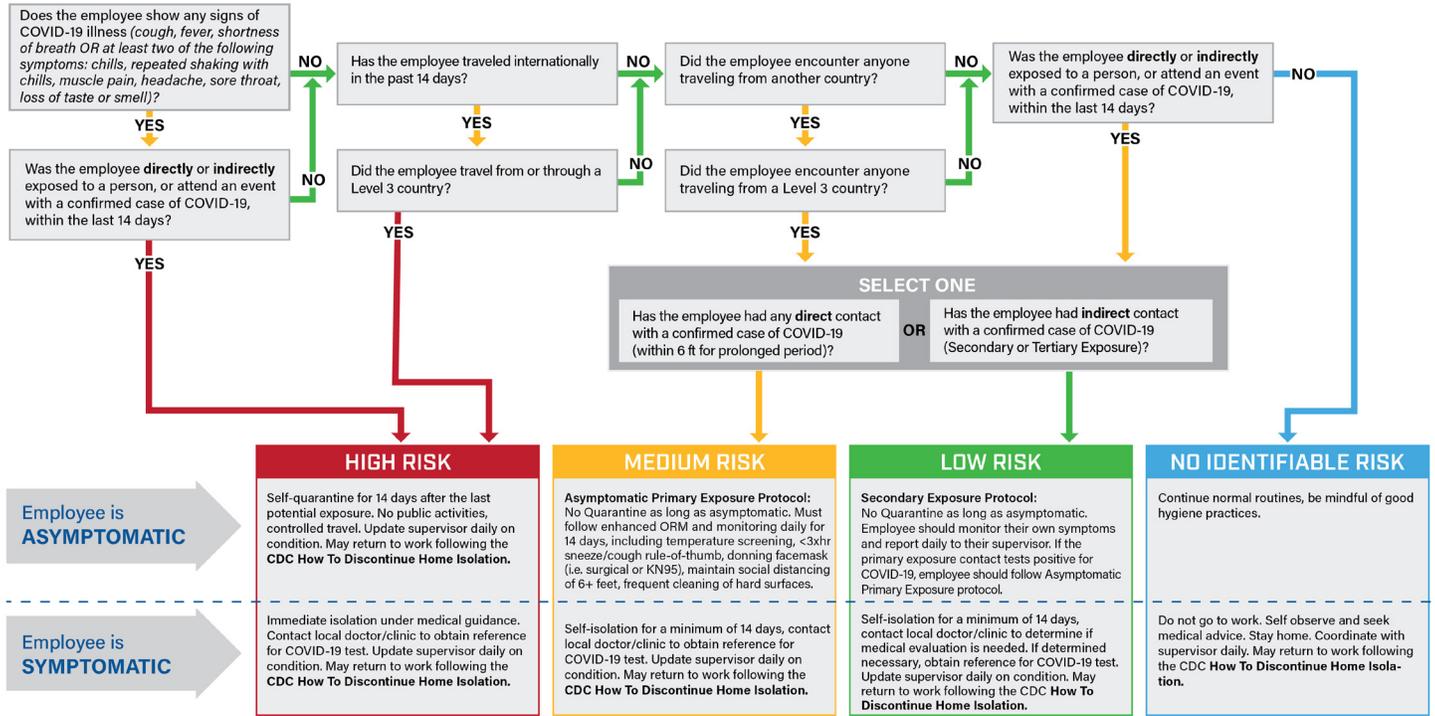
- [American Hotel and Lodging Association “Safe Stay” Initiative](#)
- Numerous wellness questionnaire examples are available online (e.g., [South Dakota Department of Health’s COVID-19: Employee Screening Questions and Guidelines](#))
- The EPA has developed a [list of disinfectants](#) for use against SARS-CoV-2.
- ASHRAE has a list of [COVID resources](#) for commercial buildings.
- AIHA’s Indoor Environmental Quality Committee developed these guidance documents about reopening and cleaning buildings after closures due to COVID-19: [Recovering from COVID-19 Building Closures](#) and [Workplace Cleaning for COVID-19](#).



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Decision Tree for Employees

COVID-19 | DECISION TREE



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Communications

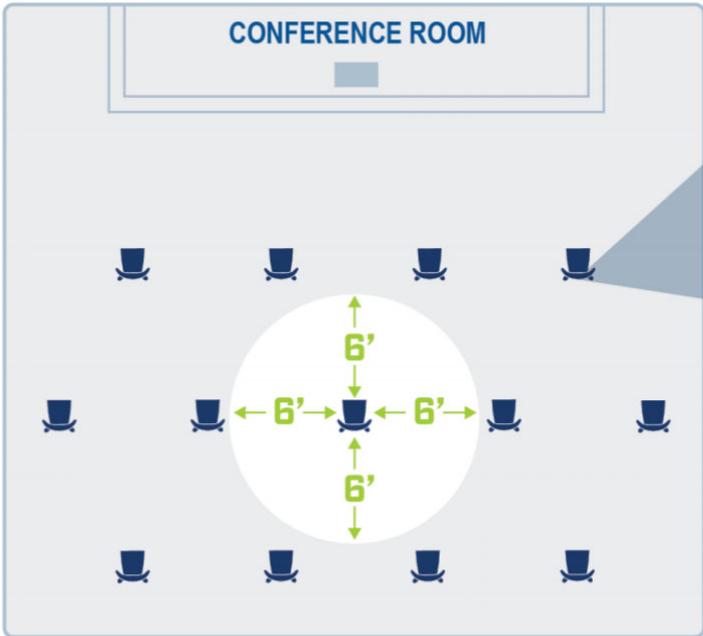
Posters that are visible through the workspace for the general public and employees.

Stop the Spread of Germs

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

- Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.
- When in public, wear a cloth face covering over your nose and mouth.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)



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About Occupational Health and Safety Professionals

Occupational health and safety (OHS) professionals (also known as industrial hygienists) practice

the science of anticipating, recognizing, evaluating, and controlling workplace conditions that may cause workers' injury or illness. Through a continuous improvement cycle of planning, doing, checking and acting, OHS professionals make sure workplaces are healthy and safe.

Get additional resources at AIHA's [Coronavirus Outbreak Resource Center](#).

Find a qualified industrial hygiene and OHS professionals near you in our [Consultants Listing](#).

Disclaimer

AIHA is not legally responsible and shall be held harmless from all claims, causes of action, and demands, whatsoever, any third party may incur on account of damage, loss or injury resulting from adhering to these guidelines.

These guidance documents were primarily developed for those smaller business that don't have readily available occupational health and safety resources, and designed to help business owners, employers, employees and consumers implement science-backed procedures for limiting the spread of the coronavirus. They are subject to any local, state, or federal directives, laws, or orders about operating a business and should only be used if they do not conflict with any such orders. These documents are subject to revision and shall be updated accordingly.

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