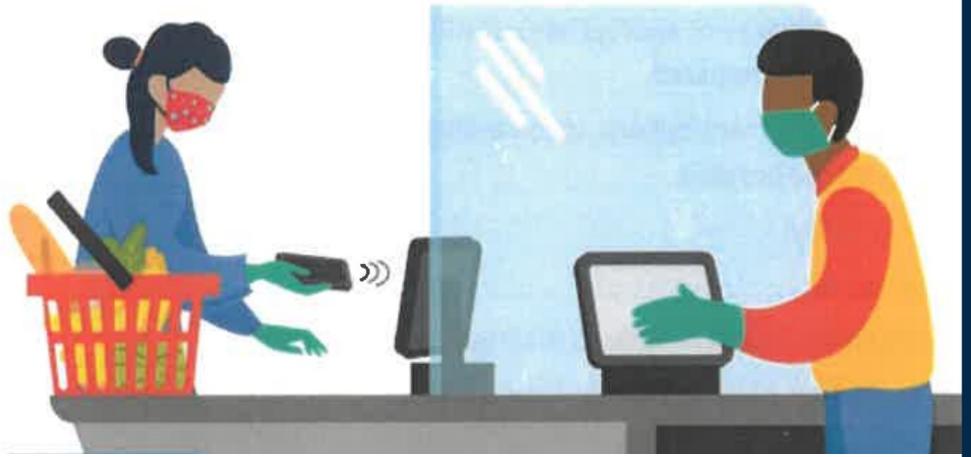


Prevent COVID-19 Exposure at Work

FAQs

About Business Safety Plans and Personal Protective Equipment



Are businesses required to have a safety plan?

Each New York business location must adopt and follow a safety plan that outlines how the business will fight the spread of COVID-19. Companies don't have to submit their plans to any government agency for approval, but every business must post its plan at each location. The New York State Department of Health or Local Health or Safety Authorities have the right to review the plan during an inspection.

My business is considered essential and has remained open since the beginning of the pandemic, do I need to develop a safety plan?

Yes, throughout the pandemic, essential retail businesses have remained open. Essential retail businesses include but are not limited to: grocery stores, including all food and beverage stores; pharmacies; convenience stores; farmer's markets; gas stations; hardware, appliance and building material stores. Safety plans were not required at first, but as the phased re-opening of non-essential stores began last spring, they were required. Today, all area businesses are required to have a safety plan on site.

Where do I find the safety plan?

Go to forward.ny.gov, under 'Reopening Guidelines', select Phase One industries, then select New York Forward Business Reopening Lookup Tool, and click 'Get Started'. You'll be asked to enter your county and business category and then be directed to interim guidance for your business category's activities during the COVID-19 public health emergency. After reading the guidance, you'll be asked to affirm that you have read and understand your obligation to operate in accordance with the guidance.

Search [NYS_BusinessReopeningSafetyPlanTemplate.pdf](#) for the safety plan template.

What's included in the plan?

The New York Safety Plan Template is a generic template that any business can complete. The first part of the templates starts with a list of physical distancing terms that employees must comply with. The second part of the safety plan template has three sections: 'Protective Equipment', 'Hygiene and Cleaning', and 'Communication'. This portion of the template requires the business to explain how it intends to keep the workplace clean to protect employees. Part three of the safety plan template has two sections: 'Screening' and 'Contact Tracing and Disinfection of Contaminated Areas'.

Are employees and customers required to wear face coverings in businesses?

Yes, Responsible Parties (owners/operators of businesses) must require that employees use masks or cloth face coverings when interacting with customers. Responsible Parties shall not permit customers into the store without a face covering, if medically able to tolerate one, and are over age two. Employers must provide employees with an acceptable face covering at no cost to the employee and have an adequate supply of coverings in case of replacement.

What is an acceptable Face Covering?

A face covering is a well-secured cloth covering or disposable mask that covers your nose and mouth. When selecting a face covering, consider the following:

- ◆ Use a face covering with two or more layers of material to better prevent unfiltered air from passing through.
- ◆ Respiratory particles can exit from both your nose and mouth. Make sure the face covering fits snugly against the sides of your face and fully covers both your nose and mouth, without slipping.
- ◆ Do not use a face covering with an exhalation valve as it allows unfiltered air to escape.
- ◆ Do not use N95 respirators, as they remain in short supply. It is essential that we save N95 respirators for our health care workers.

Do I have to wear a face covering if I'm wearing a face shield?

Yes. A face shield is not an acceptable substitute for a face covering at this time. More research is needed regarding the effectiveness of face shields in stopping respiratory droplets from spreading. Face shields may be considered for use by someone who cannot medically tolerate a face covering or in addition to wearing a face covering. It should not substitute a face covering.

If I work at a store with my family, do I need to wear a face covering while working?

Yes. When at your work site, the business's safety plan is in effect and those guidelines must be followed, even when working with members of your family or household.