



**SECTOR SPECIFIC WORKPLACE SAFETY STANDARDS FOR  
MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL FACILITIES AND GUIDED TOURS TO ADDRESS COVID-19  
As of March 18, 2021**

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**Purpose**

**These workplace safety standards for Museums and Cultural and Historical Facilities and Guided Tours, are posted in advance of their effective date to allow Museums and Cultural and Historical Facilities and Guided Tours time to prepare to operate in compliance with these mandatory health and safety standards. Museums and Cultural and Historical Facilities and Guided Tours remain subject to the previously-issued, February 25, 2021 safety standards until these revised workplace safety standards go into effect on March 22, 2021.**

These sector specific COVID-19 workplace safety are issued to provide owners and operators of these facilities and workers and visitors with instructions to help protect against the spread of COVID-19 as Museums re-open. Facilities addressed under the term “Museum” below include Museums, Aquariums, indoor and outdoor Historic Spaces and Sites, and Guided Tours.

These standards are minimum requirements only and are not exclusive or exhaustive. The public health data and matrix upon which these guidelines are based can and does change frequently, and the owner or operator for each Museum is accountable for staying abreast of any updates to these requirements.

Violation of these standards may result in civil fines of up to \$500 per violation; provided that each individual instance of non-compliance and each day of a continuing violation may be fined as a separate violation. Each person present over any capacity limit specified below may likewise be fined as a separate violation.

**Standards for Responsible Museums in Massachusetts:**

No activity at Museums shall occur without meeting these sector specific COVID-19 workplace safety standards. These standards apply until rescinded or amended by the State. Owners of Museums, Cultural and Historical Facilities, and Guided Tours shall be responsible for meeting these standards.

The following workplace specific guidance is organized around four distinct categories covering Social Distancing, Hygiene Protocols, Staffing and Operations, and Cleaning and Disinfecting.

**I. Social Distancing and Capacity Limits**

- Require face coverings for all workers and visitors, except where unsafe due to medical condition or disability
- Each museum must monitor visitor entries and exits and limit occupancy for each building open to the public at all times to:
  - 50% of the museum’s maximum permitted occupancy as documented in its occupancy permit on record with the municipal building department or other municipal record holder
  - Facilities for which no permitted occupancy limitation is on record may allow up to

- 10 persons (excluding staff) per 1,000 square feet of accessible indoor or outdoor space
  - In any case, no enclosed space within the facility shall exceed occupancy of 10 persons per 1,000 square feet
- All occupant counts and calculations shall include customers but may exclude staff, and other workers
- Post clearly visible signage regarding the need to maintain 6 feet of social distancing and not to enter a room until that distancing can be maintained
- Museums are encouraged to offer exclusive hours or other accommodations for those in high-risk populations as defined by the CDC
- Ensure separation of 6 feet or more between individuals where possible:
  - Close or reconfigure worker common spaces and high density areas where workers are likely to congregate to allow social distancing. Employers are encouraged to close break rooms or limit their use
  - Physical partitions must separate workstations that cannot be spaced out (partitions must be at least 6 feet in height)
  - Install physical barriers for ticket counters, checkout stations, etc. where possible
  - Install visual social distancing markers to encourage visitors to remain 6 feet apart (e.g., lines outside of the museum if applicable, lines to make payments, lines to use the restroom)
  - Mark exhibit rooms and hallways to indicate 6 feet separation
- Establish directional pathways to manage visitor flow for foot traffic, if possible, to minimize contact (e.g., one-way entrance and exit to rooms / exhibits, one-way pathways). Post clearly visible signage regarding these policies
- Stagger lunch and break times, regulating max number of people in one place and ensuring at least 6 feet of physical distancing
- Encourage online ticket sales and contactless payment methods if possible
- Consider using timed entry tickets / reservations and imposing time limits for visits to ensure compliance with occupancy limits
- Encourage the use of electronic versions of guide materials (such as brochures and gallery guides) where possible. All physical guide materials (such as paper brochures, gallery guides, and audio guides) must be discarded or sanitized between use. Any self-serve racks must be removed, and all materials must be handed out individually

#### **Group Size Limitations for Guided Tours**

- Each tour operator using a bus or other vehicle (such as a trolley, harbor cruise vessel, or duck boat) must limit occupancy at all times to 50% of the tour, vehicle or vessel's maximum permitted occupancy as documented in its occupancy permit on record with the relevant municipal record holder
- All occupant counts and calculations shall include customers and workers
- For all tours, guides and guests should maintain 6 feet of distance and wear face coverings

#### Boat Tours

- Occupancy limitations for boat tours using vessels with open deck space that can be used to accommodate passengers shall be determined in accordance with the formula used to set charter boat occupancy limits, outlined in the [Workplace Safety and Reopening Standards for For-Hire and Charter Vessels](#)
- Tours on vessels for which no permitted occupancy limitation is on record must limit occupancy based on the Indoor and Outdoor Event guidance on the [Reopening Website](#)

### Bus Tours

- Groups of passengers should be separated on the vehicle by empty seats. If that is not possible, vehicles should stagger open rows

### Walking Tours

- Tour operators must limit group size in walking tours to groups of no more than 25 persons, including guides. Recommend limiting tour parties to members of the same household only

## **II. Hygiene Protocols**

- Ensure access to handwashing facilities on site, including soap and running water, wherever possible and encourage frequent handwashing; alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol may be used as an alternative
- Supply workers at workplace location with adequate cleaning products (e.g., sanitizer, disinfecting wipes)
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol should be made available at entrances, exits, and throughout floor areas for both workers and visitors
- Avoid sharing equipment and supplies between workers
- Disinfect shared equipment before use by another employee
- Post visible signage throughout the site to remind workers of hygiene and safety protocols

## **III. Staffing and Operations**

- Provide training to workers on up-to-date safety information and precautions including hygiene and other measures aimed at reducing disease transmission, including:
  - Social distancing, hand-washing, proper use of face coverings
  - Self-screening at home, including temperature and symptom checks
  - Reinforce that staff shall not coming to work if ill
  - When to seek medical attention if symptoms become severe
  - Which underlying health conditions may make individuals more susceptible to contracting and suffering from a severe case of the virus
- Adjust workplace hours and shifts (leverage working teams with different schedules or staggered arrival / departure) to minimize contact across workers and reduce congestion at entry points
- Facilities should maintain operating hours that allow for on-going off-hour sanitation and cleaning
- Limit visitors and service providers on site; shipping and deliveries should be completed in designated areas
- Facilities must screen workers at each shift by ensuring the following:
  - Worker is not experiencing any symptoms such as fever (100.0 and above) or chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, fatigue, headache, muscle/body aches, runny nose/congestion, new loss of taste or smell, or nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
  - Worker has not had “close contact” with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19. “Close contact” means living in the same household as a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, caring for a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, being within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more, or coming in

- direct contact with secretions (e.g., sharing utensils, being coughed on) from a person who has tested positive for COVID-19
  - Worker has not been asked to self-isolate or quarantine by their doctor or a local public health official
  - Workers who fail to meet the above criteria must be sent home
- Maintain a log of workers and visitors to support potential contact tracing (name, date, time, contact information)
- Workers shall not appear for work or complete a shift if feeling ill
- Workers who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the Centers for Disease Control (e.g., due to age or underlying conditions) are encouraged to stay home
- Workers are strongly encouraged to self-identify symptoms or any close contact to a known or suspected COVID-19 case to the employer

Encourage workers who test positive for COVID-19 to disclose to the workplace employer for purposes of cleaning / disinfecting and contact tracing. If the employer is notified of any positive case at the workplace, the employer shall notify the local Board of Health (LBOH) in the city or town where the workplace is located. Employers must assist the LBOH with contact tracing efforts, including advising likely contacts to isolate and self-quarantine. Testing of other workers may be recommended consistent with guidance and / or at the request of the LBOH

- Post notice to workers and visitors of important health information and relevant safety measures as outlined in the Commonwealth’s [Mandatory Safety Standards for Workplaces](#)
- Interactive exhibits (i.e., touch and feel exhibits, play areas) should be closed or be configured with 6 feet of distancing clearly marked and receive frequent cleaning and disinfection. Hand hygiene station (soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer) should be accessible to promote safe use
- Additional on-site amenities and services may only open and operate when those amenities or services would otherwise be authorized to operate under the Commonwealth’s Phased Reopening Plan and then must adhere to all sector-specific safety protocols, available on the [Reopening Plan website](#), applicable to the amenity or service. Examples include:
  - Restaurants: Must follow the latest restaurant guidance
  - Gift shops: Must follow the latest retail guidance
  - Performance venues: Must follow the latest performance venue guidance
  - Events: Must follow the latest indoor and outdoor events guidance

#### **IV. Cleaning and Disinfecting**

- Clean commonly touched surfaces in restrooms (e.g., toilet seats, doorknobs, stall handles, sinks, paper towel dispensers, soap dispensers) frequently and in accordance with CDC guidelines
- Conduct frequent cleaning and disinfection of site (at least daily and more frequently if feasible)
- Keep cleaning logs that include date, time, and scope of cleaning
- Conduct frequent disinfecting of heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, bathrooms, ticket counters, staff break rooms)
- In event of a positive case, follow current CDC guidance on cleaning and disinfecting areas when someone has a COVID-19 diagnosis.
- Open windows and doors to increase airflow where possible

**Additional worker safety guidelines and resources (with hyperlinks to web pages) are available below:**  
 U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA):

[OSHA – COVID-19 Webpage](#)

[OSHA – Enforcement Guidelines Webpage](#)

[OSHA Fact Sheet – Protecting Workers During a Pandemic](#)

U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

[CDC – Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations](#)

[CDC – Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease \(Updated 3/21/20\)](#)

**Additional Information:**

Massachusetts State Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website

[mass.gov/covid19](https://mass.gov/covid19)

United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>