



## SECTOR SPECIFIC WORKPLACE SAFETY STANDARDS FOR OPERATORS OF LODGINGS TO ADDRESS COVID-19

Updated as of March 18, 2021

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### **Purpose**

**These workplace safety standards for Operators of Lodging, are posted in advance of their effective date to allow Operators of Lodging time to prepare to operate in compliance with these mandatory health and safety standards. Operators of Lodging remain subject to the previously-issued, December 13, 2020 safety standards until these revised workplace safety standards go into effect on March 22, 2021.**

These sector specific COVID-19 workplace safety standards for operators of lodging apply to all short-term residential rental properties in the Commonwealth. That includes hotels, motels, inns, bed and breakfast accommodations, and all other short-term residential rentals including those arranged through on-line hosting platforms such as Airbnb and VRBO. These standards are issued to provide owners and operators of lodging operations and workers at those businesses with instructions to help protect against the spread of COVID-19 as lodging operators return to less restricted service.

These standards are minimum requirements only and are not exclusive or exhaustive. As the public health data for disease prevention upon which these guidelines are based can and does change frequently, it is the responsibility of each lodging operator to stay 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 Lodging Operations in Massachusetts**

No activity in lodging businesses shall occur without meeting these sector specific COVID-19 workplace safety standards. These standards apply to all lodging businesses until rescinded or amended by the State. The owner of the lodging business shall be responsible for meeting these standards.

On-site restaurants, pools, gyms, spas, event venues (ballrooms, meeting rooms, etc.), golf courses, and other amenities co-located with the lodging operation may operate only as these categories are authorized to operate within the parameters of the Commonwealth's phased Re-Opening Plan and must comply with all COVID-19 safety rules that apply to free-standing facilities of the same sort. Lodging operators must consult the [Massachusetts Reopening website](#) to review these additional sector-specific safety standards.

Operators of unstaffed, individual unit lodging facilities such as short-term home or apartment rentals are required to comply with the hygiene standards specified below including cleaning requirements and

minimum periods of separation between rentals.

The following workplace specific safety standards are 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 guests when inside hallways and common areas, except where an individual is unable to wear a face covering due to a medical condition or disability
- Each facility must monitor guest entries and exits and limit occupancy of common areas (not including guest rooms) at all times to the greater of the following:
  - 50% of the space's maximum permitted occupancy as documented in its occupancy permit on record with the municipal building department or other municipal record holder
  - Spaces for which no permitted occupancy limitation is on record may allow 10 persons (excluding staff) per 1,000 square feet of accessible space
  - In any case, no enclosed space within the facility may exceed occupancy of 10 persons per 1,000 square feet
  - All occupancy counts and calculations shall include guests but may exclude staff, and other workers
- Ensure separation of 6 feet or more between individuals unless this creates a safety hazard
  - Close or reconfigure worker and guest common spaces and high-density areas where workers or guests are likely to congregate (e.g., eating areas, sitting areas, business centers, concierge service areas, lobbies/front desk check-in) to allow 6 feet of physical distancing. Employers are encouraged to close break rooms or limit their use
  - Redesign office spaces, work stations or cubicles, if possible, to ensure workspaces allow for at least six feet of physical distancing
  - Physical partitions must separate workstations that cannot be spaced out; partitions must be at least 6 feet tall
  - Install physical partitions for checkout stations (e.g., front desk) where possible, otherwise maintain 6 feet distance where not possible
  - Arrange for separation of 6 feet or more for guests during check in and check out times by installing separation markers on floor and otherwise limiting opportunities for crowding in lobby and front desk areas
  - Mark common rooms and hallways to indicate 6 feet separation
- Stagger lunch and break times, regulating max number of people in one place and ensuring at least 6 feet of physical distancing
- Establish directional pathways to manage guest flow for foot traffic, to minimize contact (e.g., one-way entrance and exit to rooms, one-way pathways). Post clearly visible signage regarding these policies
- Guests should enter through doors that are either propped open, if possible, or are automated or manually operated by a worker that is frequently handwashing and/or using proper hand sanitizer
- Limit the number of individuals riding in an elevator to allow for social distancing and ensure the use of face coverings. Use signage to communicate these requirements
- Require workers to avoid handshakes and similar greetings that break physical distance
- Workers should not open the doors of cars or taxis. Valet parking operations should be avoided

unless necessary due to physical or geographic constraints or in order to accommodate individual guests with disabling conditions

- Valets must be provided with hand sanitizer and should use sanitizer before and after parking vehicles
- Contactless payment methods are encouraged

## **II. Hygiene Protocols**

- Ensure access to handwashing facilities on site, including soap and running water, and allow sufficient break time for workers to wash hands frequently; 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)
- Require that workers wash hands or use hand sanitizer frequently
- Post visible signage throughout the site (front and back of the house) to remind workers and guests of hygiene and safety protocols
- Provide hand sanitizer in public areas throughout the facility for guest and worker use
- Limit sharing of handheld equipment, phones, desks, workstations, and other tools and equipment between workers to the extent possible
- Any shared equipment should be sanitized before, during and after each shift or anytime the equipment is transferred to a worker
- Consider installing portable high-efficiency air cleaners, upgrading the building's air filters to the highest efficiency possible, and making other modifications to increase the quantity of outside air and ventilation in offices, guest rooms, and other spaces
- Discontinue the use of shared food and beverage equipment in lobbies (including shared coffee brewers). Close manually operated ice machines or use hands free machines

## **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 workers who are sick shall not appear for work
  - 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
- 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
- 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
- Maintain a log of workers and guests to support contact tracing (name, date, time, contact information) if needed
- 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 stayhome
- Workers are strongly encouraged to self-identify symptoms or any close contact to a known or suspected COVID-19 case to the employer
- Workers shall not appear for work or complete a shift if feeling ill
- 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 must immediately 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, includingadvising 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 guests of important health information and relevant safety measures as outlined in the Commonwealth’s [Mandatory Safety Standards for Workplace](#)
- Permit breaks outside to enable social distancing, if possible
- Lodging 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
- Stagger staff meal and break times, regulate the maximum number of people in one place, and ensure at least 6 feet of physical distancing
- Adjust training and onboarding process to allow for social distancing, conduct remotely if possible
- Daily pre-shift meetings should be conducted virtually or in areas that allow social distancing
- Minimize shared touch surfaces such as kiosks, tablets, pens, credit cards, receipts and keys
- Guest room service, laundry and dry-cleaning services, and amenity deliveries should be made available using contactless pick-up and delivery protocols
- Remove or limit paper amenities in guest rooms. Remove pen, paper and guest directory, magazines and brochures; supplement with digital material or make materials available upon request
- 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 and cafes: Must follow the latest restaurant guidance
  - Gift shops: Must follow the latest retail guidance
  - Gyms: Must follow the latest fitness guidance
  - Pools: Must follow the latest pool guidance
  - Spas: Must follow the latest close contact business guidance
  - Golf courses: Must follow the latest golf guidance
  - Private events: Must follow the latest indoor and outdoor event 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 within all common areas of the lodging site (multiple times a day if the lodging site has multiple guest rooms)
- 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, rolling carts, lobbies)
- In event of a positive case, follow current CDC guidance on cleaning and disinfecting areas when someone has a COVID-19 diagnosis.
- ~~In the event that a guest presents a presumptive case of COVID-19 or a positive case, the room used by that guest may only be returned to service after undergoing an enhanced sanitization protocol, in accordance with CDC guidelines~~
- Open windows and doors in common spaces to increase airflow where possible
- Consider providing cleaning “kits” (portable containers with cleaning supplies) accessible throughout the hotel for areas that will be cleaned periodically throughout the day
- Practice enhanced room sanitation by cleaning and sanitizing all hard surfaces at a minimum each time a guest checks out and before the next guest is admitted, and laundering all linens, bedspreads and covers
- Dirty linens should be removed and transported from guest rooms in single-use, sealed bags, and pillow protectors on the guest room beds should be changed in between guests at a minimum. Bagging of these items should be done in the guest room to eliminate excess contact while being transported. All bed linen and laundry should be washed at a high temperature and cleaned in accordance with CDC guidelines
- Following each departure, consider leaving guest rooms vacant for 24 hours as part of cleaning protocol to allow for deep cleaning, disinfectant and cleaners to dry, and reasonable air exchange
- Housekeeping should not enter a guest room while the guest is physically present within the room except at the guest’s specific request; Housekeeping must otherwise only service rooms when guests are not present and minimize contact with guest personal belongings;
- Housekeepers should open the doors and windows in guest rooms when possible to increase air circulation

**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://www.mass.gov/covid19)

United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>