



## COVID- 19 | MEASURES TO PROTECT EMPLOYEES

Some operations are not conducive for all staff to work from home; therefore, those facilities are still open for business. There are countless sanitization procedures and technical retrofits to consider implementing to keep employees safe. These measures are essential, but not the only steps to take in fighting against novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Education of staff is, without a doubt, one of the best weapons to combat COVID-19. As a multi-disciplined engineering firm, NV5 services a wide range of clients across various service industries. With this experience in mind, we offer the following suggestions of simple, straightforward measures to protect your facility from COVID-19.

**Employee Training Materials** | NV5, Inc. highly recommends producing employee training materials that cover personal hygiene (tailored towards preventing infectious diseases), health, and wellness. Create materials that explain what COVID-19 is and what the symptoms are or utilize those already created by agencies like the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Other topics to focus on include, but are not limited to:

- How to properly wash your hands.
- How to practice social distancing.
- How to stop the spread of infectious diseases.
- How to properly clean and disinfect a surface.
- How to boost your immune system.
- How to reduce anxiety and stress.



Don't Touch Face



Cover Mouth & Nose



Cough into Elbow

Some of these topics may seem rudimentary and that staff should already know all of this, but this isn't about teaching employees something new. It's about reminding them, with vigilance, to constantly be practicing these precautions because they are effective when it comes to staying healthy.

Create digital materials, brochures, flyers, and posters. Create materials that can be displayed throughout the facility, especially in high-traffic locations like a lunchroom, lobby, or security office. Keep posted materials simple and brief so they are easy to read. If a significant number of staff speak multiple languages, it may be advantageous to create materials in other languages as well.

**Cleaning Schedules** | Along with utilizing professional, extensive cleaning measures for the entire facility, encourage employees to clean their workspaces before and at the end of the day. Place alcohol wipes or other cleaning solutions in designated areas or distribute them to managers/supervisors to then distribute to other staff. If an office or space is small and shared by multiple people, create a rotating schedule designating an employee to clean on a certain day to make sure all employees are doing their part.

**Make A “Social Distancing” Work Environment |** Social distancing is a measure recommended to prevent the spread of contagious diseases by creating physical space between people to reduce physical contact. The current recommendation is to allow for 6 feet of space between people. Workplaces may have several communal spaces where staff are usually less than 6 feet apart. Rearrange communal spaces to ensure employees practice social distancing in these areas.

Place signs or other markers, 6 feet apart for your employees to distance themselves. Separate desks, tables, and chairs so they are 6 feet apart from each other. Open new areas of the facility for employees to utilize to ensure that spaces do not become overcrowded. We highly recommend these suggestions for areas designed for a high capacity of people like lunchrooms, auditoriums, or conference rooms.

**Body Temperature Checks |** Given that the COVID-19 outbreak was declared a global pandemic, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) declared in March 2020 that body temperature checks can be utilized to screen employees before coming to work. This measure was previously not allowed under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

If you feel body temperature checks are right for your facility, we recommend an infrared or other digital thermometer that allows for the least amount of physical contact between people. There are also hands-free thermometer options including those that can be mounted to walls. If a hands-free device is not feasible than make sure the employees who are conducting temperature checks wear proper personal protective equipment (PPE) like gloves, masks, or even face shields. Ensure thermometers or other medical devices used are sanitized properly between usage. If a line starts to form of employees waiting for a temperature check, place markers on the ground in the waiting area so employees are 6 feet apart from each other.

Designate an isolated area for employees with high temperatures to go to wait for further screening and direction. It is useful to create a written plan, with a chain of command, that outlines the procedures when an employee is suspected sick and requires further medical screening or direction.

It is important to note that body temperature checks should be utilized with discretion. Even when complying with local and national laws, there is inherent risk for discrimination, data mishandling, or other similar claims.

**Reopening Considerations |** If your facility has been closed and is preparing to reopen, planning, and preparing now is highly advantageous. Create a plan to be proactive and think about your business model, operations, and what may need to change to keep employees safe and adhere to Federal, state, and local requirements. Make sure you, and your legal team (if you have one), are well versed on the guidelines released from the EEOC, CDC, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Federal government, state government, and local government. The Federal government has already unveiled guidelines entitled Opening Up America Again. These guidelines propose gating criteria for assessing the severity of COVID-19 in a state or region and then establishes a three-phase approach for reopening. Your state and local government may also be offering financial assistance and grant programs for businesses to utilize. Regularly check the rate of illness and number of cases in the area your business operates. This information is typically located on your county’s website.

For changes to your facility environment and operations, start working with your team to figure out how to incorporate measures like the ones mentioned above or any others that would work best given your unique operations. Be prepared to seek out new vendors or other players essential to your operations if these groups are unable to come back to work when you reopen. If travel is a part of your operations, evaluate alternatives, and adhere to guidelines (like from the CDC) on how to travel safely during this time. Provide PPE like face coverings, face shields, and gloves to employees. Stock plenty of disinfectants and sanitizers on site. Enforce social distancing practices.

It is especially important to be cognizant and prepared for a second wave since a resurgence of COVID-19 cases is possible given the nature of pandemic diseases. Prepare for vigilant monitoring of illnesses in your facility and be prepared to make changes to your reopening plan or even close again if there is a rise in cases. If while closed your facility shifted some operations to be done remotely, be prepared to assist employees with transitioning back to these means of work. From day one of reopening, strongly enforce employees to not come to work if they feel sick, practice social distancing, continue to practice good hygiene, and wear PPE.