



CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) SCHOOL REOPENING: EMPLOYEE SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- 1. Follow local or state health department guidelines, as well as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance for US K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs.** The CDC information includes links to OSHA and the Environmental Protection Agency where applicable, and provides many specific tips, plans, support resources, posters, etc. The information covers various topics specific to schools: food preparation, food service, youth sports, cleaning, disinfecting, summer camps, after-school childcare programs, and transportation/bus driver safety.
 - Schools and Childcare Programs: Plan, Prepare, and Respond
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>
 - Considerations for K-12 Schools: Readiness and Planning Tool
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community/School-Admin-K12-readiness-and-planning-tool.pdf>
 - Pages 38-45 of the “CDC Activities and Initiatives Supporting the COVID-19 Response and the President’s Plan for Opening America Up Again – Appendix F: Setting Specific Guidance.”
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/php/CDC-Activities-Initiatives-for-COVID-19-Response.pdf>
- 2. Reduce staff and student risk of Legionnaire’s disease, a severe, sometimes-lethal form of pneumonia.** The disease is caused by the Legionella bacteria that can build up in dormant buildings, stagnant pipes, air conditioning systems, and cooling towers. Helpful links include:
<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/legionnairesdisease/index.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/elearn/prevent-LD-training.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/building-water-system.html>
- 3. Develop a re-opening safety plan. The RAS COVID-19 Sample Safety Plan is not specific to school districts but provides an introductory framework.** Additional information is available at: OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19.
<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>
- 4. Update standard operating procedures (SOPs) for both the cleaning and disinfecting of all equipment used by staff/students and all areas accessed by staff/students, including buses.** Use the fewest, least toxic, but most effective products. Helpful links include:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>
<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19>

5. **Plan to minimize staff contact with parents and other members of the public.** Install plexiglass barriers and/or establish distancing at the front office. Restrict parental or public visits to the school, instead encourage online or telephonic communications between parents and staff.
6. **Implement CDC COVID-19 spread protections for staff including:**
 - Symptom screening questions.
 - Self-temperature checks.
 - Frequent hand washing.
 - Social distancing of at least 6 feet.
 - Regular cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces.
 - The use of nose and mouth face coverings when contact with others is not avoidable.
7. **Address any potential safety hazards created by face masks while supporting and encouraging this important part of COVID-19 spread prevention among employees unable to avoid contact with others.** Hazards may include:
 - Entanglement when working around some machinery.
 - Obstructed vision from fogging of glasses during safety-sensitive tasks.
 - Food safety compliance issues in food preparation and food service areas.
 - Increased risk of heat stress when working in hot environments. Emphasize social distancing for these employees to decrease the need to wear the mask in hot work environments. To provide further education, RAS has a “Beat the Heat” best practices handout and two posters regarding avoiding heat stress.
 - Risk of pathogen or bacteria growth on improperly cleaned or stored wet masks. Masks wet from saliva or sweat should be allowed to dry. Storage in plastic bags retains moisture. Storage in paper bags is best to encourage drying. CDC cleaning instructions are available here:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wash-cloth-face-coverings.html>
 - Possible false sense of security. Teach employees that while very helpful, face masks offer imperfect protection. Additional transmission prevention is needed including social distancing, frequent hand washing, and refraining from touching their face.
 - Possible virus exposure from unsafe removal and handling of used masks. Share the CDC recommendations on safe use of face coverings: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

8. **Consult local or state health department guidelines to plan your response to employees that self-report a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.**
9. **Plan your response to employees that report a possible community exposure or have recently returned from air travel abroad or domestic.**
 - The CDC recommends all international travelers stay home for 14 days after their arrival into the United States.
 - For return from U.S. travel, the CDC asks that local guidelines be followed: “Does the state or local government where you live or at your destination require you to stay home for 14 days after traveling?”
 - A 14-day self-quarantine is recommended in cases of *confirmed* exposure. In cases of *possible* exposure, you may be simply relying on your spread prevention safeguards such as symptom screening questions, self-temperature checks, and PPE protocols.
10. **Prepare for the possibility that a student or employee may exhibit symptoms or test positive. For a list of steps to take, refer to the document titled “RAS – COVID-19 School Reopening: Steps to Take When a Student or Employee Becomes Ill or Tests Positive.”** This provides information on claim reporting, return to work, OSHA recordability, and more.

Disclaimer: This document has been provided as an informational resource for RAS insureds and business partners. It is intended to provide general guidance on potential actions to implement and not intended to provide medical or legal advice or address medical concerns or specific risk circumstances. Due to the dynamic nature of infectious diseases, RAS cannot be held liable for the guidance provided. We strongly encourage recipients of this information to seek additional safety, medical and epidemiological information from credible sources cited, such as the CDC and OSHA. As regards insurance coverage questions, whether coverage applies, or whether a policy will respond to any risk or circumstance, that is subject to the specific terms and conditions of the policy or contract at issue and the particular facts of each individual circumstance.