

Reopen Elmore



Frequently Asked Questions

Rev 05/21/2020

Reopen Elmore Partners



FAQ 1: Can I reopen my business?

Businesses may open subject to sanitation and social-distancing guidelines; certain higher-risk business and activities remain closed but generally include:

RETAIL BUSINESSES: OPEN

All retail stores subject to 50% occupancy rate, social-distancing and sanitation rules.

MEDICAL & HEALTH SERVICES: OPEN

Must follow COVID-19 related rules and guidelines from state regulatory boards or public health authorities. (medical doctors, dental, physical therapy, optometry, etc.)

CHILDCARE FACILITIES: OPEN

May open subject to enhanced health and safety actions.

MANUFACTURING & INDUSTRY: OPEN

Subject to social-distancing and sanitation rules.

FULL SERVICE AND LIMITED SERVICE RESTAURANTS AND BARS: OPEN

May open with limited table seating, 6 feet between tables and subject to additional sanitation rules and guidelines.

CLOSE CONTACT FACILITIES: OPEN

Barber shops, hair salons, nail salons, tattoo services may open subject to social-distancing and sanitation rules and guidelines.

ATHLETIC FACILITIES (SUCH AS FITNESS CENTERS AND COMMERCIAL GYMS): OPEN

Athletic facilities may open subject to social-distancing and sanitation rules and guidelines. Specified athletic activities are still not allowed.

ENTERTAINMENT VENUES AND TOURIST ATTRACTIONS: OPEN

May open subject to social-distancing and sanitation rules and regulations. Group reservations must be 8 or fewer people. Facilities must be configured to separate customers by at least 6 feet from others not in their group.

FAQ 2: Should we continue to engage in social distancing?

Yes. Employees should continue to maintain a six-foot distance from others and otherwise observe social distancing in the workplace as work duties permit.

FAQ 3: What is social distancing and how can my workplace do that?

Social distancing means avoiding large gathering and maintaining distance (at least 6 feet or 2 meters) from others when possible. Strategies that businesses could use include:

- Allowing flexible worksites (such as telework)
- Allowing flexible work hours (such as staggered shifts)
- Increasing physical space between employees at the worksite
- Increasing physical space between employees and customers (such as a drive-through and partitions)
- Increasing distance between customers through less density, designated floor markings, etc.
- Implementing flexible meeting and travel options (such as postponing non-essential meetings or events)
- Downsizing operations
- Delivering services remotely (e.g., phone, video, or web)
- Delivering products through curbside pick-up or delivery

FAQ 4: If I am hosting a non-work related gathering, what are the guidelines?

Non-work related gatherings with members of the same family households are permitted. Non-work related gatherings of any size that cannot maintain a consistent six-foot distance between persons from different households are prohibited.

FAQ 5: How can we ensure engagement at the workplace in the new world of social distancing?

Some communication and recognition activities that were common before COVID-19, such as large employee meetings or company events such as picnics, can't take place now in the same manner as they were pre-pandemic. You will need to evaluate "cultural activities" that were in place, if they can occur with or without modification, if they should be eliminated for a period of time and how they might be replaced.

FAQ 6: What can you do to ensure that a contractor or vendor is not exposing your employees to a hazard?

If your employees are required to work at a third-party's site, ask them to confirm in writing that CDC and OSHA COVID-19 guidelines are being followed prior to allowing your employees to work there.

FAQ 7: How do I inform customers about guidelines in my workplace?

Measures [such as this one](#) should be posted at customer entrances.

FAQ 8: How do I keep employees who interact with customers safe?

To keep your employees safe, you should:

- Consider options to increase physical space between employees and customers such as opening adrive- through, erecting partitions, and marking floors to guide spacing at least six feet apart.
- At least once a day [clean and disinfect](#) surfaces frequently touched by multiple people. This includes door handles, desks, phones, light switches, and faucets.
- Consider assigning a person to rotate through out the workplace to clean and disinfect surfaces.
- Consider scheduling handwashing breaks so employees can wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Consider scheduling a relief person to give cashiers and service desk workers an opportunity to wash their hands.

FAQ 9: Will I have to get an updated building occupancy fire code?

No, each business must know the fire marshal capacity or square feet of the building and ensure social distancing guidelines are followed. Retail stores occupancy shall be limited to no more than 50 percent of the normal occupancy load as determined by the fire marshal. This "emergency maximum occupancy rate" shall be posted in a conspicuous place, and enough staff shall be posted at the store entrances and exits to enforce this requirement.

If the fire marshal has not evaluated your building and given you a capacity number [click here for a letter from the Alabama State Fire Marshal](#) on how to calculate that capacity number yourself.

FAQ 10: In a panic, we allowed remote work without a policy or procedure. Now that things have calmed down, should we be more formal about remote work?

You may have allowed remote work with no policy or prepared a policy specifically designed for the COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak. In either case, you should develop an appropriate standardized remote work plan that addresses your business needs for when the crisis is over.

FAQ 11: What should I do if an employee comes to work with COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, or shortness of breath)?

Employees who have symptoms when they arrive at work or become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees, customers, and visitors and sent home. Employees who develop symptoms outside of work should notify their supervisor and stay home.

FAQ 12: Do my employees need to wear cloth face coverings or personal protective equipment (PPE) such as N95 respirators and gloves to protect themselves?

CDC recommends [wearing cloth face coverings](#) in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, especially in areas of significant community transmission.

FAQ 13: Can I take an employee's temperature at work to determine whether they might be infected?

Yes. [The EEOC confirmed that measuring employees' body temperatures is permissible](#) given the current circumstances. While the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) places restrictions on the inquiries that an employer can make into an employee's medical status, and the EEOC considers taking an employee's temperature [to be a "medical examination" under the ADA](#), the federal agency recognizes the need for this action now because the CDC and state/local health authorities have acknowledged community spread of COVID-19 and issued attendant precautions.

FAQ 14: How often should my employees wash their hands while at work?

CDC recommends employees protect themselves from respiratory illness with everyday preventive actions, including good [hand hygiene](#). Employees should wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not readily available, especially during key times when persons are likely to be infected by or spread germs:

- After blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Before, during, and after preparing food
- After using the toilet
- After touching garbage
- Before and after the work shift
- Before and after work breaks
- After touching objects that have been handled by customers

FAQ 15: Can an employee refuse to work if they are above 65 years old and feel unsafe?

Only if they reasonably believe they will be in imminent danger as provided under the OSHA Act. [The "Opening Up America Again" plan](#) can be used as a guide even though it is not a legal requirement. That plan identifies the elderly as vulnerable individuals for whom special precautions need to be considered.

The plan recommends that, during Phases One and Two, vulnerable individuals continue to shelter in place, which suggests that an elderly employee could refuse to return to a worksite during these phases. The plan recommends that during Phase Three, vulnerable individuals can return to work, but should practice physical distancing.

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