



TOWN OF OAK BLUFFS

EMPLOYEE GUIDANCE: CORONAVIRUS WORKPLACE POLICIES

These employee policies include detailed measures the Town is taking to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus by complying with Massachusetts Mandatory Safety Standards. You are kindly requested to follow these rules, to sustain a healthy and safe workplace in this unique environment.

It's important that we all respond responsibly and transparently to these health precautions.

Oak Bluffs leadership will continue to monitor guidance from Public Health and State officials regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19) and these policies may be amended with the introduction of additional guidelines. If so, all changes will be sent to employees by email.

The coronavirus workplace policies apply to all Town of Oak Bluffs employees who physically work in Town buildings, facilities, operate Town Vehicles or conduct Town business outside of Town property.

We strongly recommend to our remote working personnel to read through this guidance plan, to ensure we collectively and uniformly respond to this challenge.

There is a large amount of information that has been published surrounding the coronavirus, this document has links throughout to resources and agencies for your reference.

MANDATORY STATE SAFETY STANDARDS

The Town of Oak Bluffs in efforts to re-open have established the following guidelines as the most effective strategies in reducing and preventing the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), as advised by Public Health Officials and in compliance with [Massachusetts Mandatory Safety Standards](#).

Employees should take measures to protect themselves and their co-workers from a potential coronavirus infection. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus and to know how it is transmitted.

The virus is thought to [spread mainly from person-to-person](#).

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks, these droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

[Social distancing](#) is a set of actions taken to stop or slow the spread of a highly contagious disease. The goal of social distancing is to limit face-to-face contact to decrease the spread of illness and is one of the best tools to avoid being exposed to the virus.

- Maintain appropriate 6ft physical/social distance from others.
- Avoid direct contact with other individuals where the disease could be transmitted.
 - ⊗ Eliminate handshaking, hugs, and high-5's for the time being.
- Avoid social gatherings or face-to-face meetings with coworkers where possible.
- Keep any group to less than 10 people.
- Remote conferencing is the new normal in this environment.
- Zoom meeting may be available for Town- operated meetings and programs. Please talk to your supervisor for more information and check the Town website's page: [Advisory for Conducting a Remote Meeting](#).
- Implement staggered shifts and/or allow employees to telework, as methods to lower the head count of people present in the building.

USE A FACECOVERING OR MASK

Not everyone who has COVID-19 is symptomatic. Wearing a face covering reduces the chance of transmitting the virus to another person and vice versa. Wearing a face covering is one of several measures we can take to prevent the spread of the virus. [More information.](#)

A face covering is anything that covers your nose and mouth, including dust masks, scarves and bandanas. The Town will be providing employees with 3-5 cloth masks and disposable masks for visitors who don't have one. It is important that you wear a face covering or mask in situations where it is difficult to maintain a social distance of 6ft from others.

This includes but not limited to the following examples:

- Every time you leave your workstation for any reason: bathroom; photocopier; get coffee;
- Driving in a Town vehicle with another employee;
- Entering a Town Facility or visiting another employee's office;
- Interacting with the public at a service desk, hallway or outside;
- Meeting or working in a space where the 6 ft rule cannot be observed;

Face coverings should:

- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- Be secured with ties or ear loops
- Include multiple layers of fabric
- Allow for breathing without restriction
- Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

When putting on and taking off a mask, it is important to not touch the front of it and handle the ties or ear straps. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after touching the mask.

Who is exempted from wearing a face covering?

Exceptions for wearing face masks include situations that may inhibit an individual from wearing a mask safely. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Those who cannot breathe safely;
- Those who, due to a behavioral health diagnosis, are unable to do so;
- Those communicating with people who rely on lip-reading;
- Those who require supplemental oxygen to breathe; and
- Those who are working outdoors and are able to keep physical distance from others.

GENERAL HYGIENE RULES

Following are protocols to guide your day-to-day duties in the workplace.

Clean your hands often:

- Wash your hands with soap and water especially after using the toilet, before eating and after, and if you cough/sneeze into your hands (follow the [20-second hand-washing rule](#)).
- **Use hand sanitizer** if soap and water are not available. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry.
- **Avoid touching** your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- The Town will be providing sanitization stations and wipes throughout Town buildings.

Cover your Coughs and Sneezes:

- Cough/sneeze into your sleeve, preferably into your elbow. If you use a tissue, discard it properly into a lined trash can.
- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer.
- Open the windows regularly to ensure open ventilation.
- If you find yourself coughing/sneezing on a regular basis, avoid close physical contact with your coworkers and take extra precautionary measures (such as requesting sick leave).

Shared Space:

- Use sanitizing wipes to wipe down shared and 'high use' areas, such as: photocopier, counter tops, doorknobs, refrigerator handle, coffee pots, keyboards, desk, phones;
- Do not use other employee's phones, keyboards, desks, workstations, radios or headsets;
- Bring in your own eating utensils, coffee mugs, plates and keep food in Ziplock bags or plastic containers;
- Always clean food or drink mess with paper towels and sanitizing wipes; disposing of refuse in lined trash bins.

DAILY WELLNESS QUESTIONNAIRE & REPORTING COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

- All Employees are required to submit a [Daily Wellness Questionnaire](#) before they start their shift and enter a Town Facility. This questionnaire can be found on the Town Website in the [COVID-19 Employee Resources Center](#) on the home page.

- This questionnaire is for tracking purposes, if you answer ‘Yes’ to any questions, you are not to come into work and contact your Supervisor. We rely on you to be personally responsible to not come into work if you are unwell.
- This protocol follows compliance with State Mandatory Safety Standards and is the least invasive means for the Employer to track COVID-19 symptoms and relies on your cooperation to be successful.
- If you have cold symptoms, such as cough/sneezing/fever, or feel poorly, request sick leave or work from home. Email directly your Supervisor or Human Resources wbrough@oakbluffsma.gov

COVID-19 TESTING AND RETURN TO WORK PLAN IF POSITIVE

- If an employee is sick at work, the Town will initiate the following steps:
 - The employee will be sent home immediately.
 - Their workspace will be cleaned and disinfected right away.
 - Determine who the employee had contact with before they were sent home.
- If the Town becomes aware that an employee is ill from COVID-19, we will discuss with each individual a plan for them to return to work safely for themselves, co-workers and the public.

The Town when evaluating a plan will follow [CDC Safe Re-entry Guidelines](#) in regard to testing, quarantine periods and in all instances confirmed medical certification will be required before employees can return to work.

- The Town may request employees to undertake a test for the coronavirus. Island Health Care with Quest Diagnostics have set up a testing facility at the Martha’s Vineyard Regional High School. You will be able to contact Island Health Care directly:
CALL 877 336 9855 to make an appointment
- If asked to be tested, you will not be able to return to the workplace until your results have been confirmed and sent to Human Resources. If you have a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, you can return to the office *only after* you’ve fully recovered, with a doctor’s note confirming your recovery.

All medical information needs to be sent to [Human Resources](#), who will confirm your return to work date in writing.

- All medical information will be kept confidential and shared only if necessary, with Public Health Officials, for the purpose of tracking the virus.

WORK FROM HOME REQUESTS

In response to the COVID-19 health crisis, the Town will allow employees to work from home if necessary and in compliance with the [Town of Oak Bluffs Telecommuting policy](#). Requests or requirements to work from home may be for the following reasons, please check-in with Human Resources for more information:

- If you are feeling ill but are able to work from home.
- If you self-identify as [High Risk](#) as defined by the CDC.
- If you're a parent and you have to stay at home due to childcare or school closure.
- If you have recently returned from areas with a high number of COVID-19 cases (based on [CDC](#) announcements), we'll ask you to work from home for 14 calendar days, and return to the office only if you are fully asymptomatic. You will also be asked not to come into physical contact with any colleagues during this time.
- If you've been in close contact with someone infected by COVID-19, with high chances of being infected yourself, you can request to work from home.
- Work from home required for Federal, State or local quarantine order in relation to COVID-19.
- If you need to provide care to a family member infected by COVID-19. You'll only be permitted to return to the office 14 calendar days after your family member has fully recovered, provided that you're asymptomatic or you have a doctor's note confirming you don't have the virus. You will also be asked not to come into physical contact with any colleagues during this time.

Please see more information on emergency leave adopted by the Federal Government for situations when you are unable to tele-work but have one of the above situations.

[Families First Corona Response Act Emergency Leave](#)
[Request for Leave form for FFCRA](#)

TRAVELLING/COMMUTING MEASURES:

- All work trips and events –will be cancelled/postponed until further notice.
- In-person meetings should be done virtually where possible, see the [Remote Meeting Advisory](#) on the Town website.

- If you normally commute to the office by public transportation and do not have other alternatives, you can request to work from home as a precaution.
- **International and Inter-State Travel Alert:** Effective August 1, 2020, all travelers and residents returning to Massachusetts are required to follow the new [COVID-19 travel order](#) from Governor Baker's office as follows:

All visitors entering Massachusetts, including returning residents, who do not meet an exemption, are required to:

- Complete the [Massachusetts Travel Form](#) prior to arrival, unless you are visiting from a lower-risk state designated by the [Department of Public Health](#).
- Quarantine for 14 days or produce a negative COVID-19 test result that has been administered up to 72-hours prior to your arrival in Massachusetts.

If your COVID-19 test result has not been received prior to arrival, visitors, and residents must quarantine until they receive a negative test result.

[Please click here for more information and exemptions.](#)

As an employee, you will need to notify your department head or human resources of any out-of-state travel plans, to determine if you will be required to quarantine upon your return, and of any testing requirements to be able to return to work.

Please note, if you voluntarily travel to a state that requires the two-week quarantine upon return to the Commonwealth and you are unable to telework, you will be required to use your own accrued sick, vacation or personal time. You will also be asked not to come into physical contact with any colleagues during this time

Additionally, if your vacation request requires said two week quarantine upon return to Massachusetts, approval for leave will be contingent on the availability of staff to cover shifts and work volumes in the department, given that the employee will need to be out of work for two additional weeks upon their return.

Nothing in this policy shall prohibit eligibility for leave under the Family Medical Leave Act, MA Parental Leave Act or any other Federal or State law mandating leave for certain provisions. Leave required for bereavement or sickness of an immediate family member, will be approved following Personnel by-law or respective Collective Bargaining Agreements articles.

Amended July 28, 2020

RESOURCES

- Town Website <https://www.oakbluffsma.gov/> for the latest updates, regulations and alerts from the Board of Health and Board of Selectmen.
- [Reopening Massachusetts from mass.gov](#). The official State website covering the Mandatory Safety Standard designed to help Municipalities re-open and get back to business.
- Town's [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#). This online resource offers financial and legal management, professional development training and wellness/ lifestyle benefits for employees.

The EAP also provides 24-hour counselling services that are completely confidential. If you or a family member are struggling at this time, and need to speak with a counselor, call 800-252-4555, and you will connect immediately with an experienced professional.

- For employees contact the Human Resources office for questions on these policies:
Wendy Brough, Assistant Town Administrator, 508 693 3554 ext 149
<mailto:wbrough@oakbluffsma.gov>

Website: [Employee COVID-19 Resource Center](#)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT RECEIPT

I acknowledge receipt of the Employee guidance and workplace policies in response to the COVID-19 health crisis from the Town of Oak Bluffs.

I understand that I am responsible for reading and following the guidelines described within and I agree to abide by them.

PLEASE FILL OUT THIS FORM AND PRINT THIS PAGE ONLY AND RETURN OR EMAIL TO THE HUMAN REOURCES OFFICE

WBROUGH@OAKBLUFFSMA.GOV

EMPLOYEE – _____
Please Print Name

DEPARTMENT - _____

Employee's Signature

Date