



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.

Employees whose positions are covered by collective bargaining agreement are subject only to those portions of the policy that are not separately regulated by collective bargaining agreement.

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.

PROTOCOLS ON THE USAGE OF MASKS/ CLOTH FACE COVERINGS

Effective June 1, 2020

Updated November 10, 2020

1. Purpose:

This policy outlines the usage of masks/cloth face coverings by all Town of Oak Bluffs municipal employees during the COVID-19 pandemic, in accordance with relevant state mandates.

2. Scope:

On April 3, 2020, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommended the wearing of cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.

On May 1, 2020, Governor Baker issued an Executive Order outlining requirements relating to the wearing of face coverings. This Order went into effect on May 6, 2020.

On November 2, 2020, Governor Baker issued a revised Executive Order, [COVID-19 Order No 55](#), requiring that a face covering be worn by all persons over the age of 5 “when in a public location, whether indoors and outdoors and regardless of social distancing.” The new Executive Order goes into effect on November 6, 2020 and expressly rescinds the governor’s previous order.

3. Applicability:

This protocol applies to all Town municipal employees who are physically reporting to work. Employees are expected to abide by this policy and failure to remedy any violations, may be subject to disciplinary action.

4. Protocols:

- a. The Town will provide all employees with at least three reusable/washable masks that meet the CDC and state recommendations.
- b. Any employee who prefers to obtain or use their own mask or face covering may do so. In accordance with Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines, face coverings must:
 - Cover the nose and mouth;
 - Fit securely and comfortably against the side of the face;

- Be secured with ties or ear loops;
- Allow for breathing without restriction;
- Be able to be laundered without damage or change of shape;
- Be made of at least two layers of material;
- Face coverings may not have an exhalation valve or vent

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.

Note that most scarves, bandanas, and gaiters do not comply with the above requirements.

- c. Employees are responsible for the proper usage and maintenance/cleaning of the mask or face covering they choose to use.
- d. Masks and face coverings must be appropriate for work and must not have any messaging, including but not limited to any offensive words and/or symbols. The Town retains the right to require an employee to use a Town-issued face mask if the employee's personal one is deemed not appropriate for work or does not meet DPH and CDC guidelines, as set forth in Section 4.b of this protocol.
- e. Any employee who is unable to wear a mask or face covering due to a medical or disabling condition, or who is otherwise exempted under DPH guidance, may request a medical exemption from the Human Resources Department by contacting 508-693-3554 ext 149 or email wbrough@oakbluffsma.gov and submitting substantiating medical information from a medical provider.

5. Required Usage:

Employees must use their mask/face covering in the following way(s):

- a. A mask/face covering must be worn during the workday, at all times, unless the employee is in their own personal workspace. Examples of a personal workspace could include a police cruiser or Town vehicle, in cases where the employee is not sharing that vehicle with another person, or in an employee's personal office or cubicle.
- b. Regardless of the above, employees must wear a mask/face covering in their personal workspaces if they are interacting with any other individual, in person, in that space, regardless of distance. Employees also must wear a mask/face covering in their personal workspace if the workspace is not six feet from other persons.
- c. Employees must wear a mask/face covering, at all times, when interacting with members of the public.
- d. A mask/face covering must be worn while working outside at all times.

- e. A mask/face covering must be worn at all times, in all common areas at work, including but not limited to hallways, bathrooms, and stairways.
- f. A mask/face covering must be worn in all conference spaces.
- g. The use of a mask does not replace the expectation that employees should maintain proper social distancing and good hand washing practices.
- h. In accordance with Governor Baker's Order, the Town strongly discourages employees from wearing medical-grade masks to comply with this Protocol, as medical-grade masks should be reserved for healthcare workers and first responders during this time.

6. Resources:

For assistance regarding the interpretation of this protocol, please contact the Human Resources Department at 508-693-3554 ext: 149 or email: wbrough@oakbluffsma.gov.

Employees in need of a face covering should contact their Department Head, who then shall make a request to the Highway or Human Resources Departments.

Governor Baker COVID-19 Order No. 55, issued on November 2, 2020, effective November 6, 2020: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-order-55/download>

Guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health regarding the use of face masks may be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/news/mask-up-ma>

Guidance from the Centers for Disease Control can be found here:

[CDC Guidance: Use of Cloth Face Coverings](#)

[CDC Video: How to Create a Cloth Face Covering](#)

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

- The Town recommends that all employees 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. You are required to submit this questionnaire if you answer 'Yes' to any of the criteria.
- 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

- Updated 2/9/2020

EXPOSURE TO COVID-19 AND RETURN TO WORK PROTOCOLS

If the Town becomes aware that an employee is infected with or has been exposed to COVID-19, the following quarantine procedures are immediately implemented:

- If the employee is present in the workplace, 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 employee has been EXPOSED to a COVID-19 positive person, they need to contact their supervisor immediately, and in turn they will notify Human Resources, and follow the below quarantine procedures.

Quarantine procedures, employees with no symptoms, under the guidance of the Commonwealth, are as follows:

- People who have no symptoms and have a negative test taken on Day 5 or later, can be released on Day 8 (following 7 days of quarantine).
- If the person does not have a test and does not have symptoms, they may be allowed to leave quarantine on Day 11 (following 10 days of quarantine).

Under either option, the individual must conduct active monitoring of their symptoms through Day 14 and be tested if they develop any sign of disease.

Persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation under the following conditions as recommended by the CDC:

- At least 10 days have passed since symptom onset **and**
- At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- Other symptoms have improved.

If required to quarantine, return to work is contingent on receipt from Board of Health.

For more information: [CDC Safe Re-entry Guidelines](#)

- 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, following CDC guidelines.
- All medical information sent to [Human Resources](#), will be kept confidential and shared only if necessary, with Public Health Officials, for the purpose of tracking the virus.
- Due to expiration on December 31, 2020 of government assistance programs (FFCRA), effective immediately, quarantine days will no longer be automatically paid days. In line with most Massachusetts communities, the Town will require the usage of earned time (sick, vacation and personal days) in order to be paid while quarantining.

Exceptions to this policy as a result of extenuating circumstances will be reviewed on a case by case basis with regard to unavoidable workplace contact.

-Updated 2/9/2021

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 and able to work from home.
- If you self-identify as [High Risk](#) as defined by the CDC.
- If you're a parent and you must 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), or have had close contact with a person infected by COVID-19, with high chances of being infected yourself, you can work from home following the quarantine timetable as outlined in the Travel Policy.

- 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 10 calendar days after your family member has fully recovered, provided that you're asymptomatic or eight days with a negative COVID test. You will also be asked not to come into physical contact with any colleagues during this time.
- Updated 2/9/2020

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.
- Effective March 22, 2021 all travelers and residents returning to Massachusetts are required to follow the new [COVID-19 travel order](#) from Governor Baker's office as follows:

As of Monday, March 22, all visitors entering Massachusetts, including returning residents, are advised to quarantine for 10 days upon their arrival. Travelers in the following categories are exempt from this quarantine advisory:

- Travelers who have received a negative COVID-19 result on a test administered not more than 72 hours prior to their arrival in Massachusetts. Travelers may also test out of the quarantine advisory after arrival in Massachusetts, as long as they quarantine until receiving a negative test result.
- Anyone who is entering Massachusetts for fewer than 24 hours
- Anyone who is returning to Massachusetts after being out of the State for fewer than 24 hours
- Workers who enter Massachusetts to perform critical infrastructure functions (as [specified by](#) the Federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency) during required commuting to or from work and while at work.
- Travelers who are fully vaccinated (i.e. who have received two doses of either the Moderna or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines OR who have received a single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, 14 days or more ago) and who do not have symptoms.

Return to Work Procedures – Oak Bluffs Employees

In addition to State regulations, Oak Bluffs employees need to notify department heads or human resources of any out-of-state travel plans. Quarantine is required upon return to Massachusetts, and 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 additional days upon their return.

If you voluntarily travel international or out-of-state, upon return to the Commonwealth, 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. If you are able to tele-work during this quarantine period, hours worked will be at regular time.

1. Upon return from vacation either international or out-of-state by domestic air or public transport, quarantine procedures, under the guidance of the Commonwealth, are as follows:

- People who have no symptoms and have a negative test taken on Day 5 upon their arrival back in Massachusetts or later, can be released on Day 8 (following 7 days of quarantine). Proof of a negative test must be provided to the Human Resources office before returning to the workplace.
- If the person does not have a test and does not have symptoms, they may be allowed to leave quarantine on Day 11 (following 10 days of quarantine).

2. Returning out-of-state by use of personal vehicle:

- Employees are required to test upon return to Massachusetts and on receipt of a negative test supplied to your Department Head or Human Resources, employees can return to work.

Under either option, the individual must conduct active monitoring of their symptoms through Day 14 and be tested if they develop any sign of disease.

EXEMPTIONS:

1. All employees who are fully vaccinated in accordance with the State order and with proof of vaccination, are exempt from the above provisions and not required to quarantine.
2. Anyone who is returning to Massachusetts after being out of the State for fewer than 24 hours who used their personal vehicle, are not required to quarantine.

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.

Updated March 22, 2021

REPORTING VIOLATIONS

The Town takes the safety and health of its employees seriously and for that purpose these prevention of COVID-19 workplace policies are uniformly applied to all employees.

It is understood that there is a lot of content within these policies and that employees on occasion may be in violation either by error or lack of understanding of what is required. It is the intent of the Town and for the benefit of everyone, that if you see someone in error of these policies to respectfully remind them of what is required.

However, there may be circumstances where employees do not feel comfortable communicating with co-workers directly and in these instances the following reporting procedures can be followed:

1. If an incident occurs, please report it your Department Head, who can consult with the Town Administrator or Human Resources.
2. If the incident involves a Department Head, please bring any violations directly to the Human Resources office or the Town Administrator, either in writing or in-person.
3. When management becomes aware of any issue, it shall be addressed immediately and in the most direct manner by personal counseling to the employee of correct procedures.
4. If there is a pattern of continued violations or if there is an incident so severe in its conduct that it creates an unsafe workplace, appropriate progressive disciplinary action may be required.

- 1st offense: Verbal warning of corrective behavior required
- 2nd offense: Written warning to be placed in the employee's personnel file
- 3rd offense: 1 Day Suspension – without pay
- 4th offense: 3 Day Suspension – without pay

Depending on the seriousness of the offense, the written reprimand or a one-day suspension may be the first disciplinary action taken.

Retaliation

No retaliatory action will be taken against those persons who report violations of these workplace guidelines. Retaliation or attempted retaliation in response to lodging a complaint or invoking the complaint process is a violation of this policy. Any person who is found to have violated this aspect of the policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

- Updated February 9, 2021

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](tel: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 – _____ DEPARTMENT - _____

Employee's Signature

Date