



REOPENING SAFELY

A Guide for Washington State Law Offices

Recommendations compiled by the Washington State Bar Association Coronavirus Response Task Force

PLAN

DEVELOP A STRATEGY FOR OPENING 3

PREPARE

BEFORE OPENING YOUR DOORS 4

IMPLEMENT

SUSTAIN NEW HEALTH AND SAFETY PRACTICES 5-7

TEMPLATES 8-10

REOPENING SAFELY:

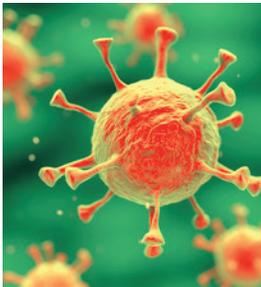
A Guide for Washington State Law Offices

The Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) Coronavirus Response Task Force compiled this guide with general recommendations for members to consider when reopening law offices. While the circumstances of each law office (e.g., staffing, client needs, location, etc.) are different, this guide is created as a toolkit of practical tips, presented in an organized and easy-to-review format meant to be adaptable to individual law office needs. This guide is neither exhaustive nor comprehensive.

Please visit the [Governor's website](#) for guidance on developing a required reopening plan (see COVID-19 Reopening Guidance for Businesses page and then go to [Professional Services](#) under Phase 2 and [Template for Phase 3 Businesses](#)).

While law offices may face financial or other logistical challenges to implementing all of the guidance indicated below, it is imperative to take reasonable and responsible steps to ensure workplace safety.

TERMINOLOGY:



The term CORONAVIRUS refers to a family of viruses which cause disease in people and animals. Viruses in the coronavirus family can cause the common flu, *MERS*, *SARS* and *COVID-19*. The term COVID-19, which first appeared in 2019, refers to *coronavirus disease 2019*, caused by the SARS-CoV2 virus. For the purposes of this guide, the term COVID-19 will be used throughout, as it characterizes the disease and its related symptoms.

The WSBA provides this guide, related materials, links, and resources for informative purposes only. The WSBA does not warrant the information provided with regard to accuracy or any other purpose. No endorsement is intended, nor does the information contained herein constitute legal advice or legal opinions. You are responsible for ensuring your own legal and ethical compliance. Any use of the materials herein is not a defense against discipline, a malpractice claim, or other legal proceeding. This guide does not modify the rules, statutes, and regulations set by the federal government, Washington Legislature, Washington Supreme Court, or the Bylaws and policies of the WSBA, or confer any additional rights.

07/13/2020

PLAN: DEVELOP A STRATEGY FOR OPENING

	Identify a small group of staff focused on developing the operational policies and procedures necessary to reopen the law office.
	Communicate with legal and support staff with one voice regarding the transition, set forth clear expectations, and offer office-wide training as needed.
	Develop clear responses to questions from staff and clients.
	Develop procedures to regularly screen and/or test employees for COVID-19 symptoms pursuant to CDC and Washington Health Department (search page for “screenings”).
	Determine how supplies will be ordered, how they will be received by the law office, and who will monitor the supply inventory.
	Monitor implementation of the reopening plan.



PLAN

PREPARE

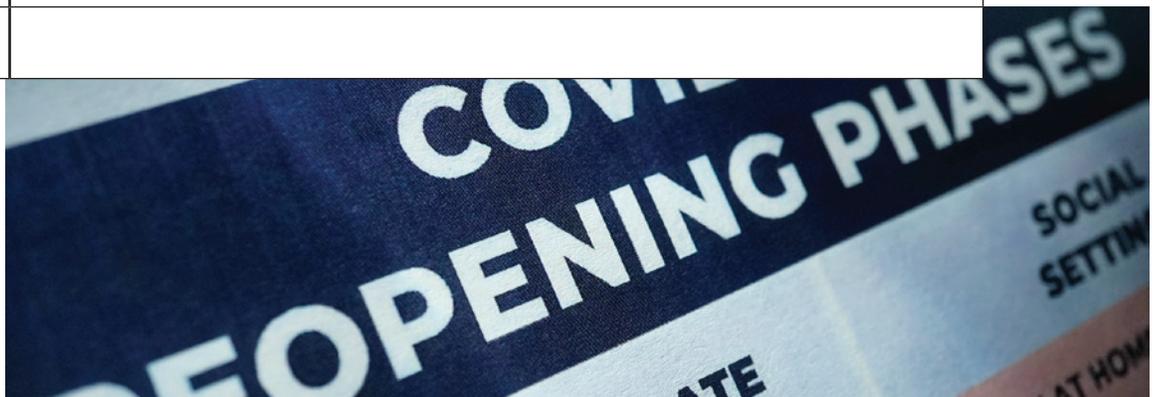
PREPARE: BEFORE OPENING YOUR DOORS

1. POLICIES

	Review federal and state statutes, guidelines, and programs governing office safety and human resources issues (visit OSHA , CDC , L&I and Washington Health Department for more information).
	Develop and update existing written office policies and procedures, where needed, for the transition back to the workplace for staff, clients, and visitors.
	Develop a plan for testing employees for COVID-19 symptoms, including the location of testing facilities nearest the office.
	Create sanitizing protocol for shared office areas (e.g., refrigerator, water cooler, coffee maker, bathrooms, etc.) and technology (e.g., copier, printer, scanner, etc.).
	Base policies on the Governor's guidelines for your office's geographic location, adjusting based on infection levels in the area.

2. SAFETY

	Follow state guidelines and CDC guidelines regarding maximum office capacity during each regional phase of reopening.
	Consider developing and maintaining attendance logs for staff, and confidential visitor logs for clients, consistent with the Rules of Professional Conduct, to aid in contact tracing . Use these to limit and track hours in the office.
	Purchase necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies for employees, clients, and visitors.

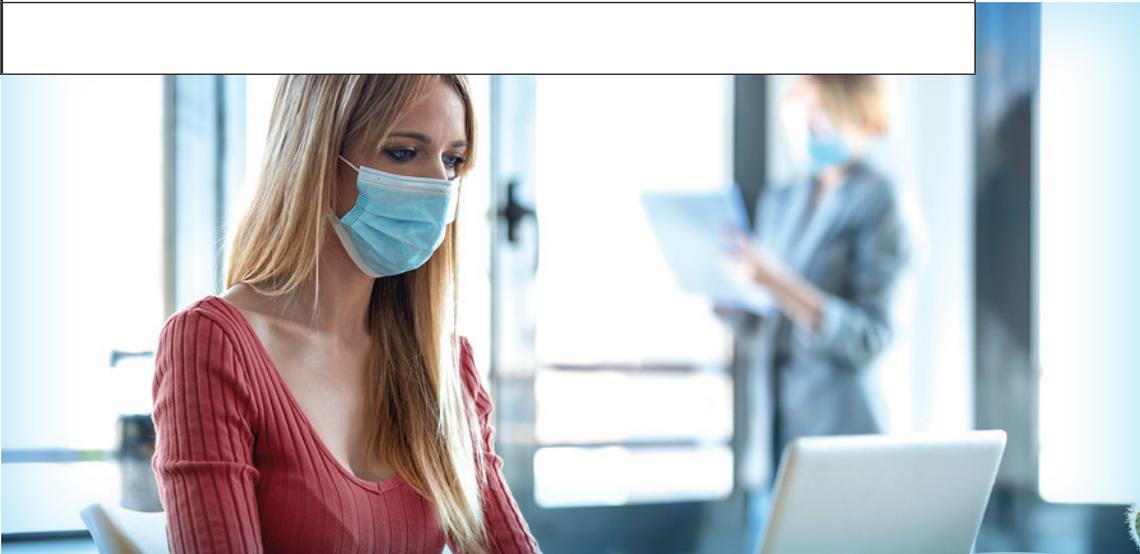


IMPLEMENT

IMPLEMENT: SUSTAIN NEW HEALTH AND SAFETY PRACTICES

1. PHYSICAL OFFICE SPACE

	Assess workplace mechanical components – including HVAC (inspection guide), fire/life safety systems, entry systems, and water temperature at hand-washing locations – to meet recommended guidelines .
	Coordinate with landlords and other tenants on opening the office and safety procedures in common areas and elevators.
	Stagger workstation and office use to limit exposure and increase the distance between employees.
	Consider developing one-way foot traffic patterns if the workplace allows for it.
	Install barriers for receptionists or other employees at high-foot-traffic locations.
	Consider using tape to clearly indicate 6-ft. spacing and flow of foot traffic.
	Develop a cleaning and sanitizing protocol in accordance with recommended CDC and OSHA guidelines.
	Install signage on social distancing and hygiene guidelines; refer to <i>Template: Establishing Law Office Health and Safety Measures</i> below.
	Minimize or eliminate meetings in small, enclosed areas.



IMPLEMENT

IMPLEMENT: SUSTAIN NEW HEALTH AND SAFETY PRACTICES

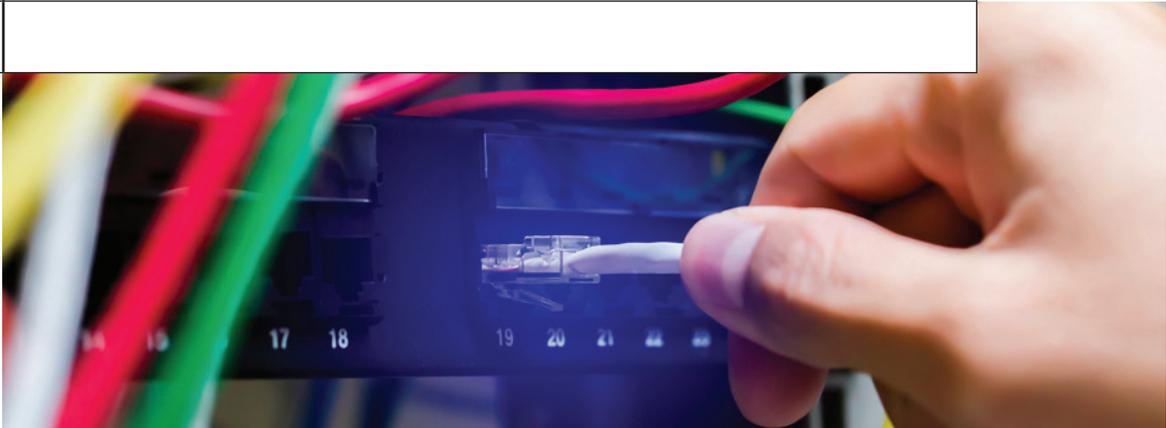
2. CLEANING & DISINFECTING

	Make available wipes and supplies to clean all common touch points between uses, e.g., near doorknobs, light switches, water cooler, coffee maker, refrigerator, etc.
	Encourage staff to bring food from home in disposable containers. Provide disposable paper cups, paper plates, and plastic flatware.
	Clean inventory and other supplies to maintain a disinfected environment.
	Follow all state-issued guidelines on mask requirements.
	Identify needed cleaning and PPE supplies and order/re-order well in advance.
	Identify a backup supply chain for required PPE supplies.



3. TECHNOLOGY

	Assess and address workplace technology needs, e.g., purchasing equipment for staff use both at home and the office, security software, etc.
	Review policies and procedures for expanded use of remote office technology such as virtual meeting technology and security.
	Consult, as needed, with IT professionals regarding technology needs, solutions, confidentiality, and security concerns.

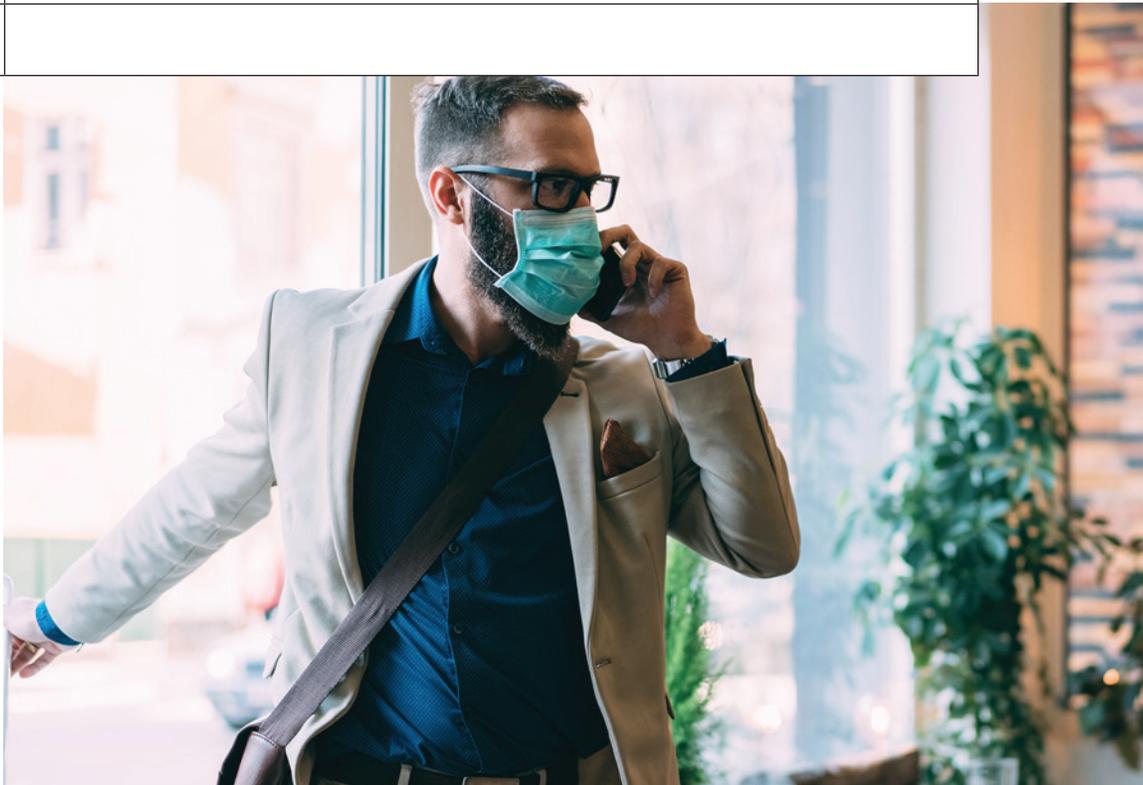


IMPLEMENT

IMPLEMENT: SUSTAIN NEW HEALTH AND SAFETY PRACTICES

4. EMPLOYEES:

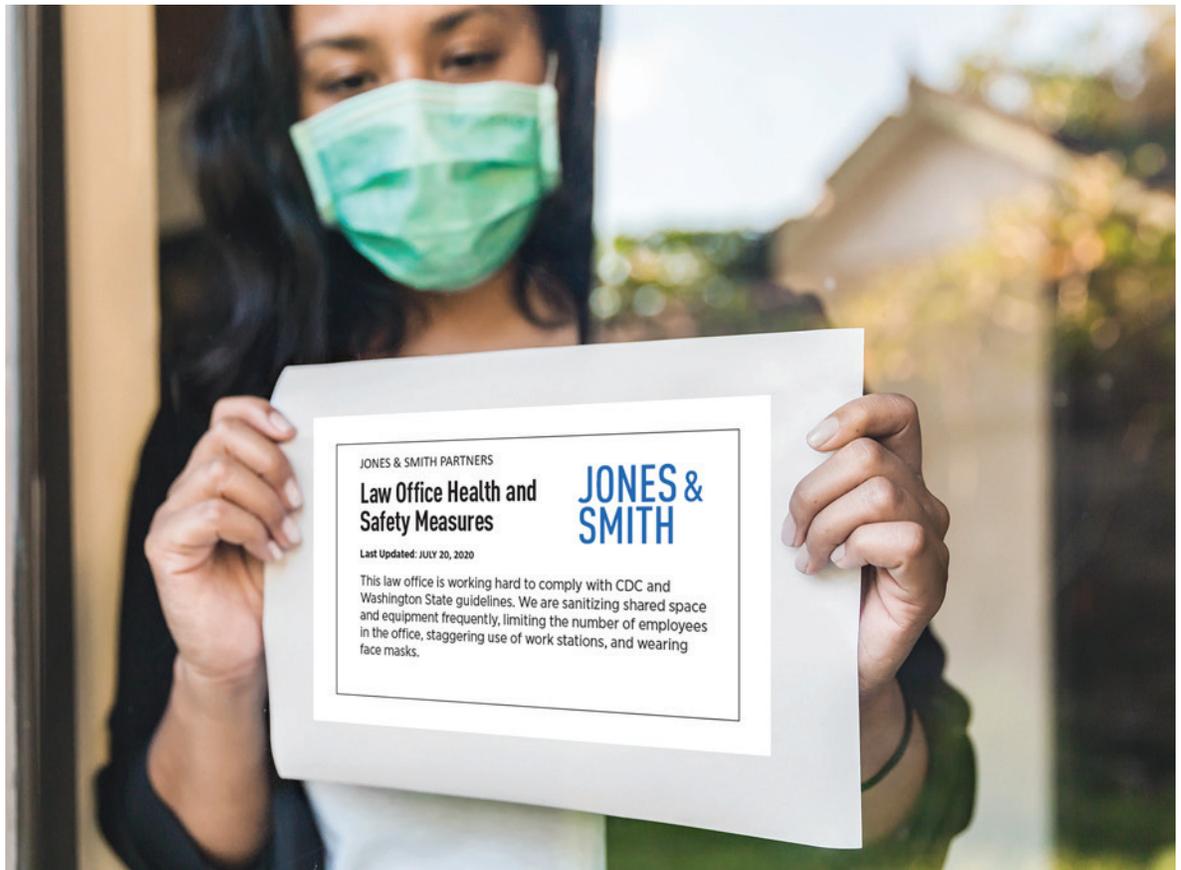
	Default to remote work and video/phone meetings.
	Encourage those who can continue to work remotely to do so until further notice.
	Decide which employees can return to the workplace.
	Be reasonable and flexible.
	Recognize some employees may have reasons to continue working remotely (e.g., pre-existing conditions, childcare).
	Stagger workday hours and monitor each staff person’s plan to return to the office.
	Discourage visits by lawyers and staff from other offices and monitor attendance.
	Develop processes that limit paper documents and incorporate contactless payment procedures where possible.



TEMPLATES: SIGNS AND MEDIA

Establishing Law Office Health and Safety Measures

On the following pages are templates for your office (customize with your logo and firm name). Place this information at a prominently visible place before entry to your law office. Update the law firm website with this information.



Other Templates available online:

[Business Signage Toolkit](#) (Washington State Coronavirus Response)

Signs: [Stay Home if Sick](#) and Media: [Social Media Toolkit](#) (CDC)

[LAW OFFICE & ATTORNEY NAMES]

Law Office Health and Safety Measures

[LOGO]

Last Updated: [DATE]

This law office is working hard to comply with CDC and Washington State guidelines. We are sanitizing shared space and equipment frequently, limiting the number of employees in the office, staggering use of work stations, and wearing face masks.

[LAW OFFICE & ATTORNEY NAMES]

Law Office Health and Safety Measures

[LOGO]

Last Updated: [DATE]

This law office is working hard to comply with CDC and Washington State guidelines. We are sanitizing shared space and equipment frequently, limiting the number of employees in the office, staggering use of work stations, and wearing face masks.

ATTENTION VISITORS

The **Law Office Safety Measures** listed below are put into place for all who enter our office space. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation. Signs are posted at all entrances displaying capacity limits and requirements for entry. Please review this signage and the guidance below before entering the office.

- Employees, clients, and visitors will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms upon entry, per state regulations.
- Stay home or go home immediately if you feel sick or show signs of illness. Employees may be asked to leave the office when showing signs of illness.
- Wear personal protective equipment (PPE), such as a mask covering mouth and nose.
- Follow social distancing guidelines maintaining at least 6 feet between people.
- Avoid close interactions with others.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water (or use hand sanitizer).
- Use your elbow or a tissue to cover coughs and sneezes.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

Thank you.