



**DIRECTIVE OF THE HEALTH OFFICER No. 2020-18**

**DIRECTIVE OF THE HEALTH OFFICER OF  
THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO REGARDING REQUIRED BEST  
PRACTICES FOR BUSINESSES OPERATING OFFICE FACILITIES**

**(PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTIVE)**  
DATE OF DIRECTIVE: June 13, 2020

By this Directive, the Health Officer of the City and County of San Francisco (the “Health Officer”) issues industry-specific direction that businesses operating Office Facilities, as described below, must follow as part of the local response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) pandemic. This Directive constitutes industry-specific guidance as provided under Section 6 of Health Officer Order No. C19-07e issued on May 22, 2020, and updated on June 11, 2020 (the “Stay-Safe-At-Home Order”) and, unless otherwise defined below, initially capitalized terms used in this Directive have the same meaning given them in that order. This Directive goes into effect immediately upon issuance and remains in effect until suspended, superseded, or amended by the Health Officer. This Directive has support in the bases and justifications set forth in the Stay-Safe-At-Home Order. As further provided below, this Directive automatically incorporates any revisions to the Stay-Safe-At-Home Order or other future orders issued by the Health Officer that supersede that order or reference this Directive. This Directive is intended to promote best practices as to Social Distancing Requirements and sanitation measures, helping prevent the transmission of COVID-19 and safeguard the health of workers, customers, and the community.

**UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE  
SECTIONS 101040, 101085, AND 120175, THE HEALTH OFFICER DIRECTS AS  
FOLLOWS:**

1. This Directive applies to all owners, operators, managers, and supervisors of any business operating in an indoor office facility and that are otherwise authorized to operate under the terms of the Stay-Safe-At-Home Order, including Essential Businesses, Outdoor Businesses, and Additional Businesses that operate, at least in part, within any office space (“Office Facilities”).
2. Attached as Exhibit A to this Directive is a list of best practices that apply to Office Facilities (the “Best Practices”). Each Office Facility must comply with all of the relevant requirements listed in the Best Practices.
3. Each Office Facility, before it begins to permit Personnel or members of the public onsite, must create, adopt, and implement a written health and safety plan (a “Health and Safety Plan”). The Health and Safety Plan must be substantially in the form attached to this Directive as Exhibit B.
4. Guidance from the Department of Public Health related to Office Facilities is attached to this Directive as Exhibit C and at <http://www.sfdph.org/directives>.
5. If an aspect, service, or operation of the Office Facility is also covered by another Health Officer directive (all of which are available at <http://www.sfdph.org/directives>), then the Office Facility must comply with all applicable directives, and it must complete all relevant Health and Safety Plan forms.



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6. Each Office Facility must (a) make the Health and Safety Plan available to a member of the public and Personnel on request, (b) provide a summary of the Health and Safety Plan to all Personnel working on site or otherwise in the City in relation to its operations, and (c) post the Health and Safety Plan at each entrance to any Office Facility within the City. Also, each Office Facility must provide a copy of the Health and Safety Plan and evidence of its implementation to any authority enforcing this Directive upon demand.
7. Each Office Facility subject to this Directive must provide items such as Face Coverings (as provided in Health Order No. C19-12b issued on May 28, 2020, and any future amendment to that order), hand sanitizer or handwashing stations, or both, and disinfectant and related cleaning supplies to Personnel and to the public, all as required by the Best Practices. If any such Office Facility is unable to provide these required items or otherwise fails to comply with required Best Practices or fails to abide by its Health and Safety Plan, then it must cease operating until it can fully comply and demonstrate its strict compliance. Further, as to any non-compliant Office Facility, any such Office Facility is subject to immediate closure and the fines and other legal remedies described below, as a violation of the Stay-Safe-At-Home Order.
8. For purposes of this Directive, “Personnel” includes all of the following people who provide goods or services associated with the Office Facility: employees; contractors and sub-contractors (such as those who sell goods or perform services onsite or who deliver goods for the business); independent contractors; vendors who are permitted to sell goods onsite (such as farmers or others who sell at stalls in farmers’ markets); volunteers; and other individuals who regularly provide services onsite at the request of the Office Facility. “Personnel” includes “gig workers” who perform work via the business’s app or other online interface, if any.
9. This Directive and the attached Best Practices may be revised by the Health Officer, through revision of this Directive or another future directive or order, as conditions relating to COVID-19 require, in the discretion of the Health Officer. Each Office Facility must stay updated regarding any changes to the Stay-Safe-At-Home Order and this Directive by checking the Department of Public Health website (<https://www.sfdph.org/directives>) regularly.
10. Implementation of this Directive augments—but does not limit—the obligations of each Office Facility under the Stay-Safe-At-Home Order including, but not limited to, the obligation to prepare, post, and implement a Social Distancing Protocol under Section 6 and subsection 15.h of the Stay-Safe-At-Home Order. The Office Facility must follow these industry-specific Best Practices and update them as necessary for the duration of this Directive, including, without limitation, as this Directive is amended or extended in writing by the Health Officer and consistent with any extension of the Stay-Safe-At-Home Order, any other order that supersedes that order, and any Health Officer order that references this Directive.

This Directive is issued in furtherance of the purposes of the Stay-Safe-At-Home Order. Where a conflict exists between this Directive and any state, local, or federal public health order related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including, without limitation, the Social Distancing Protocol, the most restrictive provision controls. Failure to carry out this Directive is a violation of the Stay-Safe-At-Home Order, constitutes an imminent threat



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**and menace to public health, constitutes a public nuisance, and is a misdemeanor punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both.**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tomás Aragón".

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Tomás J. Aragón, MD, DrPH,  
Health Officer of the  
City and County of San Francisco

Date: June 13, 2020



**Exhibit A to Health Officer Directive No. 2020-18 (issued 6/13/20)**

**Best Practices for Businesses Operating Office Facilities**

**In addition to preparing, posting, and implementing the Social Distancing Protocol required by Section 6 and subsection 15.h of Health Officer Order No. C19-07e (the “Stay-Safe-At-Home Order”), each Office Facility that operates in the City must comply with each requirement listed below and prepare a Health and Safety Plan substantially in the format of Exhibit B, below.**

**Requirements:**

***1. Section 1 – Requirements For All Office Facilities:***

- 1.1.*** Make any necessary adjustments to the layout of the Office Facility to allow for proper social distancing. Such adjustments may include some or all of the following, where feasible s: adding markers to the floor space to signal appropriate social distancing; spacing racks or shelves six feet or more apart; widening high-traffic areas; or adding Plexiglas screens to areas where receptionists or security guards are stationed.
- 1.2.*** If all or part of an Office Facility has been vacant or dormant for any significant period during the Stay-Safe-At-Home Order, the Office Facility must ensure plumbing is functioning and that pipes are flushed before use. The San Francisco PUC provides guidance for flushing and preparing water systems at:  
<https://sfwater.org/index.aspx?page=1327>.
- 1.3.*** Make any necessary improvements to the ventilation of the Office Facility, including:
  - 1.3.1.*** Ensure HVAC system and air exchangers are serviced and functioning properly.
  - 1.3.2.*** If feasible, the Office Facility must increase the percentage of outdoor air through the HVAC system, disable demand-control ventilation controls that reduce air supply based on temperature or occupancy, and increase natural ventilation by opening windows when environmental conditions and building requirements allow.
  - 1.3.3.*** Consider running the building ventilation system even when unoccupied to maximize ventilation.
  - 1.3.4.*** If the Office Facility uses pedestal fans or hard mounted fans, adjust the location of fans to minimize air from fans blowing from one Personnel’s space to another’s space.
  - 1.3.5.*** The Office Facility must require Personnel remove any personal cooling fans from their workspaces to reduce the potential spread of any airborne or aerosolized viruses.
- 1.4.*** Develop a plan to ensure Personnel comply with social distancing requirements and to limit the number of people in the Office Facility at a given time, consistent with the requirements in the Stay-Safe-at-Home Order. Such plans must address: (i) requiring Personnel to notify management before coming into the Office Facility; (ii) staggering Personnel shifts to avoid exceeding capacity limits and provide for sanitation; (iii) requiring all Personnel who can perform their work remotely to telecommute;



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(iv) converting in-person meetings to online meetings; and (v) encouraging members of the public, vendors, and contractors to make appointments before coming to the Office Facility.

- 1.5.** Modify policies for using elevators and stairs serving as access to, from and within the Office Facility.
  - 1.5.1.** Where feasible, make stairways accessible to Personnel and visitors entering the Office Facility. Encourage Personnel who are physically able to use the stairs.
  - 1.5.2.** Limit capacity in elevators to the **lesser** of: (1) four people, or (2) the number of people who can fit in the elevator while maintaining at least six feet of distance from each other. During peak building entry and exit times, this number may be adjusted to up to four individuals at a time for any elevator that does not allow for six feet of physical distance between riders.
  - 1.5.3.** Add signage to elevators and on all floors requiring anyone who rides the elevator to wear Face Coverings as provided in Health Order No. C19-12b issued on May 28, 2020, and any future amendment to that order (the “Face Covering Order”) and discouraging people from talking in the elevators.
  - 1.5.4.** Provide hand sanitizer outside the elevators on the ground floor.
- 1.6.** Require Personnel and members of the public who enter the Office Facility to wear Face Coverings as provided in the Face Covering Order.
- 1.7.** Develop a plan and implement daily COVID-19 symptom self-verifications for all Personnel as required by the Social Distancing Protocol (contained in Health Officer No. C19-07e, issued on June 1, 2020 and any future amendment to that order) (the “Social Distancing Protocol”).
- 1.8.** Develop a plan and implement sanitization requirements, including:
  - 1.8.1.** Instruct all Personnel to wash their hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and to wash hands or use hand sanitizer (provided by the Office Facility) before and after touching high-touch surfaces, such as copy machines or shared office tools, equipment or materials.
  - 1.8.2.** Ensure Personnel have access to cleaning supplies so that they can clean surfaces as needed on their own when custodial staff is not available.
  - 1.8.3.** Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces in common areas routinely throughout the day and otherwise in accordance with the Social Distancing Protocol. Common areas include, but are not limited to the following common-use area: lobbies, lounge or seating areas, meeting rooms, entry ways, hallways, bathrooms, elevators, and stairwells. Clean and disinfect all high touch surfaces and devices found in common areas such as door handles, railings, faucets, toilets, elevator buttons, furniture, computers, telephones and other devices that are touched by many people in a single day. Clean and disinfect the Office Space at the end of a lease and prior to occupancy by a new lessee of the Office Space.



- 1.8.4.** Wait until all people leave their office or personal workspace for the day before cleaning that area. Where feasible, wait at least one hour after the space is vacated before cleaning the area. If possible, Personnel should also wait an hour after the space has been cleaned before returning to the workspace.
- 1.9.** Where feasible, prohibit Personnel from sharing equipment, such as phones, tables, file cabinets, copy machines, or desks. Any work furniture, tools or equipment that must be used by more than one individual must be sanitized in a manner that complies with the requirements contained in the Social Distancing Protocol. If Personnel must share a workspace, such as on alternating shifts, then the location must be sanitized in a manner that complies with the requirements contained in the Social Distancing Protocol after each use.
- 1.10.** Minimize non-essential travel for Personnel between worksites and for business travel outside of San Francisco.
- 1.11.** Office Facilities with gyms or other exercise equipment must not allow any use of the gym or equipment until gym facilities are otherwise permitted under the Stay-Safe-At-Home Order or other Health Officer order. Once gym facilities are allowed to open, Office Facilities must comply with any industry-specific guidance for operating gyms or using fitness equipment.
- 1.12.** If Personnel or a member of the public refuses to comply with the Face Covering Order or other provision of this Directive, then the Office Facility must refuse entry to the facility or request that the individual leave the facility. Nothing in this Directive is intended to alter the obligations an Office Facility may otherwise have under applicable law to provide reasonable accommodations to Personnel or members of the public.
- 1.13.** Office Facilities that also maintain privately owned public open spaces must comply with the Social Distancing Protocol for such spaces. Office Facilities must also place high-touch equipment and furniture in their open spaces, such as tables, benches, and chairs, off-limits by either removing the items or by using signage and physical barriers, as appropriate.
- 2. Section 2: Requirements Specific to Office Facilities that are Not Classified as an “Essential Business”**
- 2.1.** Office Facilities that are not Essential Businesses may expand operations beyond the Minimum Basic Operations, as set forth in the Stay-At-Home-Order, but only to the extent the Office Facility permits Personnel to telecommute to the maximum extent possible and only as necessary to ensure business operations.
- 2.2.** Office Facilities that are not Essential Businesses must adjust their maximum occupancy rules based on the size of the Office Facility to limit the number of people (including Personnel and members of the public), as follows:
- 2.2.1.** Businesses with fewer than 20 Personnel must reduce their maximum occupancy to the number of people who can maintain at least six feet of physical distance from each other in the Office Facility at all times.
- 2.2.2.** Businesses with 20 or more Personnel must reduce their maximum occupancy to the **lesser** of: (1) 20% the Office Facility’s normal maximum occupancy, or (2) the number



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of people who can maintain at least six feet of physical distance from each other in the Office Facility at all times.

### Health Officer Directive No. 2020-18 (Exhibit B) Health and Safety Plan (issued 6/13/2020)

Each Office Facility must complete, post onsite, and follow this Health and Safety Plan.

Check off all items below that apply and list other required information.

*Business/Entity name:*

*Contact name:*

*Facility Address:*

*Contact telephone:*

*(You may contact the person listed above with any questions or comments about this plan.)*

- Office Facility is familiar with and complies with all requirements set forth in Health Officer Directive No. 2020-18, available at <http://www.sfdph.org/directives>.
- Completed any necessary adjustments to the layout of the Office Facility to allow for proper social distancing.
- Plumbing is functioning and, if the Office Facility was dormant, the pipes are flushed.
- Completed any necessary improvements to the ventilation of the Office Facility.
- Developed a plan to ensure Personnel comply with social distancing requirements and to limit the number of people in the Office Facility at a given time, consistent with the requirements in the Stay-Safe-at-Home Order.
- Modified policies for using elevators and stairs, including placing signage regarding any applicable limits on use of elevators.
- Personnel and members of the public who enter the Office Facility are required to wear Face Coverings as provided in the Face Covering Order.
- Developed and implemented a plan and implement daily COVID-19 symptom self-verifications for all Personnel as required by the Social Distancing Protocol.
- Developed and implemented a plan and implemented sanitization requirements.
- Personnel have access to cleaning supplies so that they can clean surfaces as needed on their own when custodial staff is not available.
- High touch surfaces in common areas are cleaned and disinfected routinely throughout the day.

#### **Additional Requirement Applicable to Non-Essential Businesses:**

- Adjusted maximum occupancy rules based on the size of the facility to limit the number of people (including Personnel and members of the public) in the Office Facility.

#### **Additional Measures**

Explain:



## **Tips and Frequently Asked Questions for Opening Office Facilities During COVID-19**

**June 13, 2020**

The following tips developed by the San Francisco Department of Public Health for use by local facilities and will be posted at [www.sfdcp.org/businesses](http://www.sfdcp.org/businesses). This interim guidance may change as knowledge, community transmission, and availability of PPE and testing change.

**AUDIENCE:** Businesses who bring Personnel back to office facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**BACKGROUND:** On June 13, 2020, the Health Officer issued Directive No. 2020-18 setting forth requirements for businesses operating in offices and permitting non-essential offices to reopen with limitations. "Business" includes many types of organizations, such as nonprofit organizations, employers, building owners, building managers, community-based organizations and others. "Personnel" includes employees, contract workers, gig-workers, volunteers and others.

**PURPOSE:** This document highlights the main points of the Directive, and outlines steps you should take to safely reopen your Office Facility in compliance with the Directive.

### Prepare: Before Your Business Re-Opens

#### **Create a Health and Safety Plan and a Social Distancing Protocol**

A template [Health and Safety Plan](#) can be found at Exhibit B of Directive 2020-18, posted at [www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp](http://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp). This must be available for all personnel, and posted at the entrance to the office site. If other Directives apply to your business, you may need to complete more than one Health and Safety Plan.

A template [Social Distancing Protocol](#) can be found at [Appendix A of the Shelter in Place Health Order](#), posted at [www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp](http://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp).

These documents must be available for all personnel, and posted at the entrance to the office site. They serve as reminders of all the best practices that your business needs to follow including universal requirements such as requiring face coverings, [signage](#), enforcing six foot distances between people, and more specific things such as requirements for cleaning office facilities.

#### **Check your space after the long period of low usage**

Check for pest infestation or harborage, and make sure all pest control measures are functioning. Perform routine maintenance on ventilation systems including air ducts and vents. If your business was closed for a long period of time, flush out the stagnant water from the plumbing lines by running water through fixtures. Detailed guidance may be found at: <https://www.sfwater.org/flushingguidance>.

#### **Create a Safer Space**

You may need to change the **physical layout** of your office to help social distancing. Modifications to consider include marking spaces with tape or other decals to indicate six-foot distances, creating a buffer for areas where people interact such as a Plexiglas screen for receptionist and security, or a surface where items can be put for a later pickup, to prevent a hand-off between two people.



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Improve **ventilation** to the building by increasing the percentage of outdoor air through the HVAC system, disabling demand-control ventilation controls that reduce air supply based on temperature or occupancy and increase natural ventilation by opening windows when environmental conditions and building requirements allow. Consider running the building ventilation system even when unoccupied to maximize dilution ventilation.

**Reduce capacity of shared spaces** such as break rooms and conference rooms. Make this clear through signage.

### Getting Back to Business

In order to reopen offices, you must follow Directive 2020-18, including Best Practices in Exhibit A, posted at [www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp](http://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp). Below is a summary of the tasks.

- Develop and implement your Health and Safety Plan(s) and Social Distancing Protocol.
- Adjust your office to allow personnel to follow the social distancing protocol, including:
  - Limit the number of people, including staggering shifts, start times and break times and by utilizing telework options as feasible to reduce the density of Personnel in common areas such as screening areas, lobbies and break rooms.
  - Reduce the number of people allowed into the office by limiting deliveries and moving meetings online whenever possible.
  - Limit capacity in elevators to no more than 4 people (or fewer during non-peak periods if 6 feet of distance cannot be maintained). Post signs requiring people to wear face coverings and discouraging talking in elevators.
  - Businesses that are not considered by the Directive to be “essential” must limit Personnel to the number of people who can be present while maintaining 6-foot social distancing. If the business has more than 20 people, this number can be no more than 20% of maximum capacity.
- Adjust your office to reduce transmission of respiratory viruses, including:
  - Review your ventilation system to maximize outside air ventilation.
  - Prohibit handshaking, hugs and fist bumps.
  - Put out supplies for handwashing, disinfecting, and face covering.
  - Remove objects that are passed between people. You should also prevent shared touching of objects such as phones, keyboards and other work supplies.
  - Support cleanliness by limiting the number of items Personnel may keep on their desks to allow for regular cleaning and sanitization by custodial staff.
  - Set up self-serve cleaning stations that ensure Personnel have access to cleaning supplies so that they can clean surfaces as needed on their own when custodial staff is not available.
  - Use no-touch waste receptacles when possible.
  - Gym equipment and facilities in offices must remain closed at this time.



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## Educate, Screen and Assist Personnel

Personnel must be trained to implement the Health and Safety Plan and the Social Distancing Protocol, and may need training on cleaning and disinfection.

Please share with Personnel and include in your Health and Safety Plan the following information for:

- What to do if [Personnel answer Yes to any of the daily screening questions](#), posted at <http://www.sfdcp.org/businesses>, including a plan for safe transport of Personnel who become sick while at work to home or a healthcare provider.
- What to do if [Personnel have a positive COVID-19 test](#)
- When Personnel can [return to work after COVID-19](#) symptoms, testing, or close contact.

If Personnel appear to have symptoms upon arrival at work or become sick during the day, they should immediately be separated from other employees, customers, and visitors, and sent home.

Provide information on employer or government-sponsored sick leave and other benefits Personnel may be entitled to receive that would make it financially easier to stay at home (see [Paid sick leave in San Francisco](#)). Remember that Personnel cannot be fired due to COVID-19 results or needed time off for recovery.

## Monitoring and Adjusting

At least on a weekly basis, think about how your Business and Personnel are doing, how well you are complying with your Social Distancing and Health Plan, and what changes are needed to improve your response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Look for new guidance from the [SFDPH Communicable Disease Control and Prevention](#) or the frequently updated page on sf.gov with [comprehensive resources for businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Is my employee required to wear a Face Covering while in their private office alone, or while sitting at their desk around which I have installed Plexiglas dividers?**

You do not need to wear a Face Covering if you are alone in a private office that is not shared with others and is not likely to be visited by others without prior warning, such as an office with a closed door. If another person enters the area, both of you must immediately put on a Face Covering during the interaction.

**If my employee tests positive for COVID-19 will SFDPH tell me? If they test positive in a county outside of SF will I be notified?**

SFDPH may contact employers to trace contacts, but the identity of the person who has tested positive for COVID-19 is protected health information, and typically cannot be shared except in select circumstances.

**What should I be prepared to tell SFDPH to assist with contact tracing if my employee tests positive for COVID-19?**

You should determine the last day that the person who was diagnosed with COVID-19 was present at the workplace. Be prepared to identify any close contacts the person had at the workplace. In an office setting, close contacts are defined as someone who is within 6 feet of the person diagnosed with



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COVID-19 for more than 10 minutes while the person with COVID-19 was not wearing a facemask.

## **May all of my staff return to the office on June 15<sup>th</sup> if I can keep them socially distanced?**

The current directive requires that all staff who can work from home continue to do so, but allows for those staff that are necessary for operations to return to the workplace under the guidelines outlined in [Directive 2020-18](#), posted at [www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp](http://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp). Non-essential businesses are required to limit the number of people in the office (including Personnel and members of the public) as set forth in the directive.

## Resources

### **Local:**

[Downloadable signage to print yourself](#), or to request [printed posters](#)

How to get tested for COVID-19 in San Francisco <https://sf.gov/citytestsf>

Information from the [San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development about COVID-19](#), such as employer requirements, employee benefits, and resources; [Avoiding discrimination and retaliation during COVID-19](#).

[Paid sick leave in San Francisco](#)

### **California:**

[State of California Resilience Roadmap](#)

CAL OSHA [information on protecting workers from COVID-19](#)

### **National:**

[AIHA- Reopening: Guidance for General Office Settings](#)

CDC: Resuming Business Toolkit: [CDC Resuming Business Toolkit](#)

[CDC Return to Work Guidance](#)

[CDC COVID-19 Employer Information for Office Buildings](#)