

CENTRALINA READY TO RESTART

Local Government Planning Guide: Prep Your Space

Throughout the coronavirus crisis, local governments across the Centralina region adjusted operations to provide essential services, information and emergency response. As we begin to ramp up in-person municipal and county operations in an era of our “new normal,” we encourage our members to consider these five steps as you plan for reopening and comply with all federal, state and local guidelines.



This document will take a deeper dive into step **#2 Prep Your Space** to have a better understanding of how your workspace should be prepared for reopening.

Prep Your Space Recap

In the [Ready to Restart Planning Guideline](#) we presented three key steps to preparing for temporary or permanent alterations to local government buildings to accommodate social distancing, sanitization and federal and state guidelines. Here’s a quick recap:

1) Identify these common types of spaces in your public buildings either in a list or by labeling a floor plan:

- Public areas
- Employee workspaces and common areas
- Transitional spaces
- Functional “back of the house” areas



2) Take a tour to assess your existing conditions. Pair up or engage a team to scan for problem areas related to social distancing, cleaning and disinfecting and occupancy. **Get copies of the floor plan or make a checklist to scan for the following:**

- Which high-touch surfaces will require cleaning and which require disinfecting? Do you have existing cleaning wipes or hand-sanitizer stations? Where are they located?
- Which employee workspaces are / are not social distance compliant?
- Are there, barriers or windows at public service counters?
- Where are the pinch points in transitional spaces?
- Can interior or stairwell doors be safely propped open?
- How many chairs and access points are in each conference room?
- Are there existing occupancy limitations in certain rooms or areas of the building?



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3) Develop a plan and a punch list. Revisit your user group priority access list (step one), the types of spaces in your building and the results of your tour. Develop a plan for each type of space and corresponding punch list of things to do to prepare for reopening. **Things to consider:**

Do you need to purchase supplies or obtain cleaning services to be compliant with state guidelines and CDC reopening guidance for cleaning and disinfecting? What alterations are needed to rooms or workstations to comply with social distancing? Are they temporary or permanent? Are there policies or procedures that you could use to limit contact in lieu of alternations?

What signage do you need to describe access, circulation patterns and maximum occupancy?

Do you need to set occupancy limits on conference rooms? *Note: between 28-36 square feet is needed per person for effective social distancing.*

Required Reading!

1. CDC Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>
2. OSHA: Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19
<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>
3. North Carolina COVID-19 Guidance for Business (Phase One – as of May 5, 2020)
<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/covid19/covid-19-guidance>

Solutions Matrix

As you develop your plan for step three, consider the following solution suggestions to address common existing conditions or challenges in local government buildings. They are organized by space type and also include potential policy change solutions as an alternative to or in addition to physical changes.

Here are some quick tips that apply to all spaces:

Post signs to communicate clearly, including any policy changes, behavioral expectations and state / federal guidelines, i.e. NC “Know Your W’s” and Maximum Occupancy [templates](#).

Use the floors! Mark floors with social distance waiting spots and circulation.

Go touchless! Remove or reduce items that people can touch. Or provide and stock sanitization and cleaning stations for customers and staff to use after coming into contact with high-touch surfaces.

Use only disinfectants from approved lists from CDC and other authorities.



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Public Areas: These areas normally high-traffic, accessible areas where members of the public come to conduct business, get information or speak with staff. Restrooms and large meeting spaces may also be in this publicly accessible zone.

Existing Condition or Challenge	Solution Options
Lobby space is small	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Remove or limit waiting area furniture. o Mark places on the floor for customers to wait to ensure social distancing. o Post signs outside of the doors regarding capacity limits in the lobby and any visitation policies. o <i>Policy Solution:</i> Ask customers to wait outside or in their cars until they are ready to be seen; may be combined with a text/phone call alert system.
Open front counter or desk with no screen or separation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Mark floor with tape indicating the appropriate distance for a visitor to stand when approaching the front desk or counter. o Consider installing a “sneeze guard” for added protection. o Provide mask and gloves for all frontline staff. o <i>Policy Solution:</i> Continue with virtual services and payment processing; require face covering and gloves for frontline during when they interact with the public.
Sign-in required to enter the building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Remove sign-in sheet and pen; have frontline staff record information to reduce touchable surfaces. o <i>Policy Solution:</i> Temporarily waive requirement.
Lobby brochures, magazines and flyers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Remove or limit reading material. o Mount a TV and have a scrolling set of images and announcements. o Repurpose a wall with cork board and post key documents.
Large public meeting spaces or conference rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Determine maximum capacity and post notices outside the doors of conference and meeting rooms. Use this helpful resource from FEMA to determine social distancing occupancy loads. o Adjust the amount of seating by removing chairing or roping/taping off chairs. o Place automated hand sanitizer dispensers and wipes in rooms. o <i>Policy Solution:</i> Provide and require face coverings; designate a staff person to monitor and enforce social distancing or other policies before, during and after the meeting.
High-touch surfaces in bathrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Wherever possible, replace high touch objects with low or no-touch objects, i.e. automated light switches, hand dryers, faucets, soap dispensers and garbage cans. o Provide extra paper towels, wipes or automatic hand sanitizer stations near doors.



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Employee Workspaces and Common Areas: Typically, these are access controlled or designated areas of the building with employee offices, workspaces and meeting rooms; common areas can include restrooms, breakrooms or lunchrooms, copier or printer rooms and supply or storage areas.

Existing Condition or Challenge	Solution Options
Cubicle setup may not be six feet apart	<p>If feasible, reduce the density of employees in the area by moving them to conference rooms.</p> <p>Install a larger temporary divider or “sneeze guard.”</p> <p><i>Policy Solution: Employ a rotation of in-office and telework days to ensure social distance; require a face covering if employees are in the office on the same days.</i></p>
More high touch objects tend to be in common areas	<p>Wherever possible, remove high touch objects that are shared among staff such as water coolers, whiteboard markers, staplers, remote controls, etc.</p> <p>Disable touch screens.</p> <p>Discourage employees from bringing treats from home for the office to share.</p>
Some meeting spaces are too small to appropriately social distance	<p>Consider temporarily restricting access or closing those rooms.</p> <p><i>Policy Solution: Allow employees to meet virtually while in the office or meet outside if there is enough space to spread out.</i></p>
Multiple people waiting to use refrigerator or microwave	<p>Temporarily limit use or close.</p> <p>Provide wipes and hand sanitizer in the room.</p> <p><i>Policy Solution: Use a sign-up sheet for windows of time that these amenities can be accessed to limit overlap.</i></p>
Crowding for printers and scanners	<p>Post signage about distancing and designate spaces to stand while waiting.</p> <p>Provide wipes and hand sanitizer in the room.</p> <p><i>Policy Solutions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Go paperless! Encourage staff to limit printing. o Enable secured print functions on copiers, if available. o If available, ask an intern or administrative staff to print and scan to reduce the number of people using and touching the machines.
Tables in break room are too small or break room is too small to allow for social distancing	<p>Close break room for seating.</p> <p>Set up temporary outdoor seating or place chairs outside so employees can eat outside and practice socially distancing.</p> <p><i>Policy Solution: Allow or encourage staff to eat at personal workspaces.</i></p>



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Transitional Spaces: These spaces can include hallways, stairwells, elevators or other areas of physical transition for either the public, employees or both.

Existing Condition or Challenge	Solution Options
Small elevators make it difficult to social distance	Encourage staff and customers to take the stairs whenever possible. Close elevators to general use and allow only for handicap accessibility. <i>Policy Solution: Create a “one person at a time” policy for elevator usage.</i>
Hallways and stairwells are too small to have six feet of social distance	Use floor and wall signage to designate the one-way direction of foot traffic. <i>Policy Solution: Encourage or require face coverings to be worn when not at a personal workspace.</i>
Staff and visitors may be unaware of these transitional spaces that are too small to have 6ft of social distance	Create a floorplan with spaces labeled and have it available for staff and visitors.

Functional “Back of the House” Areas: Larger buildings may have loading docks, janitorial areas, trash disposal areas, etc. that service providers access or where vendors make deliveries.

Existing Condition or Challenge	Solution Options
Large number of deliveries and overlap of delivery times	Engage with vendors to determine a plan for resumption of operations and understand what policies they are putting in place for deliveries. If possible, buy items in bulk to reduce the number of deliveries made to the building. Control entrances to limit number of surfaces being touched. Limit access to delivery area to select staff.
Irregular cleaning schedules for “back of house” areas	Create a plan with cleaning and janitorial staff to make sure all areas are being disinfected regularly.

