

Legislative Council

COVID-19 Prevention Policy

To minimize the spread of disease and protect the health and safety of Legislators, legislative staff and others in light of the risks presented by the highly contagious COVID-19, the following policy is established for legislators, legislative staff and essential third parties who are working onsite in legislative space. Essential third parties means members of the press, contractors, and delivery staff. This policy replaces the Legislative Council Policy on the Wearing of Protective Face Coverings During Authorized Meetings of Legislative Committees. This policy is effective through the end of the 129th Legislature and will be subject to continuing updates.

Every individual has a responsibility to comply with the policy for their own safety and for the safety of others working in Legislative space. If an individual in a legislative space is not in compliance with this policy, legislative staff is expected to leave the legislative space.

1. Access to legislative space; legislative staff offices. Legislative spaces are only open to legislators, staff and essential third parties that have passed the daily health self-screening checklist described in section 7. The State House and committee rooms in the Cross Office building will only be open to legislators, staff and essential third parties. In addition, only legislative staff are permitted in legislative offices within the State House and Cross Office building, as determined by the respective office director.

2. Electronic communication encouraged. Staff is strongly encouraged to employ electronic workplace communications, such as emails, teleconferencing and telephone calls, with Legislators and staff to reduce the frequency of face-to-face contact. All individual face-to-face meetings that occur should be limited and must be scheduled with staff in advance by appointment and conducted in accordance with the requirements governing protective face coverings and physical distancing.

3. Staggering physical presence of staff. To reduce the number of staff members working together at the same time and ensure safe physical distancing, office directors are authorized to implement, where possible, staggered work shifts and non-standard work hours as appropriate.

4. Remote attendance. In order to reduce the number of persons in any committee room and to ensure the safety of staff and legislators, staffing support for committee meetings, including staffing by committee analysts and committee clerks, shall be provided remotely through appropriate electronic means. The

Executive Director, acting under the authority of the Legislative Council, shall establish appropriate practices, protocols and procedures to effectively carry out this policy, including procedures that would allow staff to be in the room for short periods as may be necessary.

In addition, a Legislator or essential third party may choose to attend a committee meeting remotely through appropriate electronic means and be in the room for short periods as may be necessary to comply with Legislative Council policy and rules of the Legislature.

5. Protective Face Coverings. An individual who enters any legislative space must wear a protective face covering while in that legislative space in a manner that covers the nose and mouth, unless the individual (1) is unable to wear a protective face covering due to a medical condition; (2) is alone in their own office; (3) is alone in a legislative space; or (4) is in their own cubicle and able to socially distance at a minimum at 6 feet.

If an individual is unable to wear a protective face covering due to a medical condition, that individual may not be in the room in which a committee meeting is being held, but may participate remotely.

6. Physical Distancing. All individuals in legislative space shall seek to maintain at all times a distance of at least 6 feet from others within that legislative space. The directors of individual legislative offices are authorized to set office-specific guidelines in order to meet these physical distancing requirements, including but not limited to room capacity, access to offices, and traffic flow. All individuals are expected to comply with posted room and elevator capacity signs as well as posted office-specific physical distancing guidelines.

7. Daily Screening. Prior to initial arrival at and entry into the State House or legislative space in the Cross Office Building each day, legislators, legislative staff and essential third parties shall complete a self-screening of their health status using a checklist that consists of the following questions:

- Do you have a cough or sore throat?
- Do you have a fever or do you feel feverish?
- Do you have shortness of breath?
- Do you have a loss of taste or smell?
- Have you been around anyone exhibiting these symptoms within the past 14 days or who has tested positive for COVID-19 regardless of symptoms?

- Are you living with anyone who is sick or quarantined, or have you been in the last 14 days?
- Have you been out of state in the last 14 days?
- Have you tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 14 days?

If the staff answers to any of these questions is "yes," please contact your supervisor to discuss next steps. Guidance will be provided to supervisors regarding appropriate next steps. If a staff person who has answered "yes" to any of these questions is physically capable of working, that person's supervisor may authorize that staff person to work from home. If a legislator or essential third party answers "yes" to any of these questions, the legislator or essential third party shall refrain from entering legislative space.

8. Cleaning, Disinfecting, and Sanitizing. To supplement the efforts of the housekeeping staff whose efforts focus primarily on the public areas and in addition to proper hygiene including regular hand washing, the Legislature will provide access to the following cleaning and disinfecting supplies along with instructions on proper use.

A. Legislative staff must have access to disinfectant wipes or disinfectant spray and paper towels to clean their work surfaces, and a no-touch designated trash bin to dispose of used items.

B. Disinfectant wipes, or disinfectant spray and paper towels, must be located next to copiers, printers and other shared equipment. Disinfectant spray should never be sprayed directly on equipment, but should be sprayed on paper towels that are used to wipe down equipment before and after use.

C. Hand sanitizer must be provided in multiple locations around work spaces and in public spaces.

9. Posting of policy. Copies of this policy must be conspicuously posted in legislative staff offices and other legislative spaces.

Questions about this policy should be directed to the Executive Director's office, grant.pennoyer@legislature.maine.gov.