

Guidance for Managers and Owners: Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in Apartment Complexes

All businesses should take steps to prevent the spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19). This is especially important in apartment complexes because of the communal areas that increase the risk for spread of the virus. Every building is unique, so it is up to you, the owners, operators and administrators, to be proactive, find what works at your location, and make a plan to protect residents and staff. This guidance is for managers or owners of apartment complexes where there are communal areas such as lobbies, laundry rooms, elevators, fitness rooms, trash rooms, etc. The information includes steps to take now to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in your building.

Make a plan.

- Assess your facility's operational requirements.
- Cross-train employees to maintain coverage for those operation requirements.
- Implement policies and practices with staff for social distancing, teleworking, coverage, flexible leave policies, and rapid communication.
- Implement guidance with residents for social distancing and rapid communication.
- Share your plans with residents and let them know what they can do right now. Respond to residents' questions and concerns quickly.
- Plan to operationalize additional recommendations from the Health Department if needed.
- Visit healthvermont.gov/COVID-19 to stay up to date on the most recent information and general guidance.

Prepare your common spaces.

Modify shared areas such as laundry, mail, trash and fitness rooms.

- Consider changes to reduce interactions, like creating a schedule for the laundry room.
- Line all trash cans and ensure that staff who handle trash wear disposable gloves.
- Move tables, chairs and other seating areas 6 feet apart.
- Provide tissues, trash cans and hand sanitizer in common areas.
- Consider closing the fitness room or limit the number of people using it at one time.

Clean and disinfect shared areas daily.

- Create a system to ensure scheduled cleaning.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces often.
- Follow the cleaning product instructions, including wearing the appropriate protective equipment and using the correct concentration of the product.

Modify staff workspaces to allow for social distancing.

- Don't share work equipment.
- Cancel unnecessary meetings and trainings or do them remotely if possible.

Inform your staff and residents.

Educate and encourage everyone to take these everyday precautions.

- Stay home as much as possible, practice social distancing and wear a [cloth face covering](#) when you need to leave home.
- Encourage using the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Avoid gathering in common areas.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Wash your hands just before leaving your apartment and just upon entering.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with your sleeve or a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in your homes using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Always wash your hands if your hands are visibly dirty.
- Encourage staff and residents to visit healthvermont.gov/COVID-19 or call 2-1-1 if they have questions.

Actively support employees to reduce transmission.

- Encourage sick employees to stay home.
- If employees must be on site, encourage the use of cloth face coverings.
- Send employees home who come to work sick.
- Offer flexible leave policies (non-punitive emergency sick leave, leave for sick family members or childcare).
- Don't require proof (e.g. medical note) of COVID-19-related sick time or to return to work.
- Make sure hygiene and personal protective supplies are available, such as gloves, soap, water, and hand sanitizer where handwashing is not available.
- Communicate to employees that if they are well but share a home with someone with COVID-19, they should notify their supervisor and contact the Health Department.

The Health Department's Role

The Vermont Health Department is here to help. We will:

- answer questions about infection control
- respond to questions from residents regarding public health concerns
- provide guidance to help you come up with a solution for your facility
- serve as a subject matter resource
- provide public health guidance materials

When the Health Department learns that a resident or staff member of your building tests positive for COVID-19, a member of the COVID-19 response team will contact the individual, provide guidance, and will follow up with close contacts of positive cases to provide guidance.

The Health Department will reach out directly to owners or managers if there is a need to do further infection control.

Additional Resources

[Print materials](#) (CDC)

[Using Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19](#)

[Guidance for Businesses](#) (CDC)

[Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities](#) (CDC)

[List of Disinfectants for Use Against COVID-19](#) (EPA)

[Stress and Coping](#) (CDC)

[What to do if you are a close contact of someone who is diagnosed with COVID-19](#)