

## COVID-19 PPE AVAILABILITY

Members expressed difficulty obtaining necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) and other related materials, such as: hand sanitizer, thermometers, and cleaning supplies. Understanding supplies remain limited, the state established a website directory "Pennsylvania COVID-19 PPE & Supplies Business-2-Business (B2B) Interchange Directory," which can be found at: <https://dced.pa.gov/pa-covid-19-medical-supply-portals/pennsylvania-covid-19-ppe-supplies-business-2-business-b2b-interchange-directory/>. This website contains extensive lists of suppliers for COVID-19 PPE & supplies.

## Buyer Beware!

"Price gouging" for PPE and supplies has also been voiced as an issue by Trust members. Rules governing a disaster emergency in the State of Pennsylvania prohibit companies and vendors from charging a price which exceeds 20% of the average price at which those goods were sold 7 days preceding the declared State Emergency ( March 6, 2020). Complaints for price gouging can be submitted to the Pennsylvania Attorney General's COVID-19 website (<https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/covid19/>). Unfortunately, price gouging has become a common issue, and as of July 10, 2020, the state Attorney General received 5,211 complaints! We will alert Trust members to additional PPE and supplies resources as we move into the fall.

## Grant Award Update

This year, the PCPA Trust Board announced its plans to increase the budget to allow all Members the opportunity to receive a grant award. 39 out of 41 applications were received and all have been awarded their requested amount to be used primarily for the protection of their staff against COVID. Checks will be distributed in August.



## Coronavirus (COVID-19) Reopening Guidelines



The CDC, in conjunction with the American Industrial Hygiene Association, developed employer guidelines for reopening office areas, as well as safely providing passenger transport. A summary of key highlights that apply to Trust members include:

### Office and Workspaces

For general office spaces used by staff, some key points to keep in mind:

- ✦ Prior to re-opening, perform a detailed review of the configuration of the workspaces and seating areas. Review the floorplan and reconfigure seats and furniture to preserve recommended physical distancing (minimum 6 feet).
- ✦ Eliminate reception seating when possible and request that individual phone ahead. Common areas (e.g., lobby, security check-in) should be cleaned and disinfected at least once a day.
- ✦ Regulate the use of common areas with clear signage (including maximum occupancy) and physical distancing measures.
- ✦ Install plastic partitions at reception areas. These can often be constructed of plastic sheeting from local home centers or hardware stores.
- ✦ Replace high frequency contact items such as bulk snacks and water coolers with touchless water dispensers and request that staff and individuals bring their own water bottles, coffee mugs, and individually wrapped snacks.
- ✦ If vending machines are used provide and require cleaning and disinfectants to wipe down after each use.
- ✦ Ventilation systems HVAC intakes and returns should be cleaned and disinfected daily. Use of portable fans in offices or areas where individuals congregate should be limited to avoid spread of droplets to nearby individuals. With the summer months upon us this aspect of HVAC controls cannot be overlooked as many Trust members use portable fans in their operations.
- ✦ For buildings that have not been occupied for several months, consider hiring an HVAC and plumbing contractor familiar with [ANSI/ASHRAE/ACCA Standard 180-2018-Standard Practice for Inspection and Maintenance of Commercial Building HVAC Systems.](#) Many Trust member facilities have been idle and HVAC and idle equipment when idle can accumulate mold and other contaminants. This is an equally important HVAC issues that often is overlooked in reopening plans.
- ✦ For single restrooms, provide signage and materials (paper towels and trash cans) for individuals to use without touching the handles, and consider providing a key so disinfection measures can be better controlled.



## Safety Committee Corner

With the start of the new policy year, now is a good time to reflect on your committee's accomplishments during the prior year and set goals for the new policy year. Also, we encourage all Trust Members to accomplish the required annual safety committee training within the first half of the policy year. This has the benefit of ensuring that all new members of the committee are trained early in their tenure, so they fully understand their role. Also, it helps prevent any committee members from missing their training for the year. Remember, ALL committee members must be trained within each policy year. We will be conducting online certified safety committee training sessions on July 20<sup>th</sup>, August 10<sup>th</sup>, September 21<sup>st</sup>, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, and December 14<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested in joining the webinar, please contact Lisa Bellis or Gordon Smoko for a link to register.



### Mental Health & COVID-19

Coping with stress during this period is a challenge for everyone and becoming more of a critical issue every day. The National Institute of Mental Health, along with the CDC, has some useful recommendations to help improve our coping skills, along with a recorded video that can be used for employee training at their website: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/education-awareness/shareable-resources-on-coping-with-covid-19.shtml>

Some of the tips include:

- Take a break from the news.
- Make time to unwind.
- Connect with others.
- Take care of your body.
- Set goals and priorities.
- Focus on what *you* can control.

Safety committees can use these materials in a social campaign as well, see the website for details on downloading the social media kit.

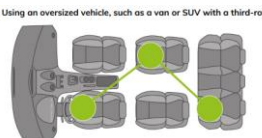
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- Doors to multi-stall restrooms should be able to be opened and closed without touching handles whenever possible.

The website for further information is <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/office-buildings.html>. We encourage Members to develop a facility reopening plan that includes controls recommended by the CDC and AIHA. Managing this exposure can be challenging. Transportation aspects are another key area to consider for reopening.

### Vehicles Used for Transport

As organizations transition to more normal operations, below are some items to keep in mind regarding agency vehicles used by staff to transport individuals:

- Develop policies and communications mandating, where possible, that passengers should wear face coverings.
- For shared vehicles or vehicles transporting individuals, use disinfecting wipes and solutions to clean all frequently touched surfaces in the vehicle, including: keys, steering wheel, dash buttons, all handles and door handles (inside and out), seatbelt buckle, wheelchair equipment, window regulators, and the fuel cap. Vehicle disinfecting should be completed before transporting, between passenger trips, and at the end of a shift. Consider covering fabric seats with liquid proof cover that can be washed or wiped and disinfected.
- If it is not possible to thoroughly wash hands during transportation, provide drivers and driver aides with hand sanitizer. Instruct them to immediately and thoroughly wash their hands as soon as practicable.
- When possible, arrange passengers as far from the driver and other passengers as possible. This diagram provides recommended seating in vans commonly used by Trust members. The green locations are the recommended seating locations. For larger vans the concept is the same; try to maintain as much distance as possible between driver and individuals.  

- If an individual leaves an item behind, remove and place the item into a plastic or paper bag. Store the bag away from passenger area, where possible. Thoroughly wash hands. If it isn't possible to wash hands, have the driver use hand sanitizer before and after handling the items. The driver should wash their hands when possible, even after using hand sanitizer.
- Avoid using the 'recirculated air' option for the vehicle's ventilation during passenger transport. Instead, use the vehicles 'fresh air' option to bring in fresh outside air and/or lower the vehicle windows. Consider leaving the windows down between passenger pickups.
- Vehicle driver and passenger logs, including date and time, transportation routes, and all stops, are essential for contact tracing. A good resource for contact tracing programs and training can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/open-america/contact-tracing-resources.html>.

There are other COVID-19 reopening considerations for Members not covered here. The CDC and AIHA partnered to develop a website outlining best practices for reopening under the banner "Get Back to Work Safely." To register for the July 14<sup>th</sup> webinar, check out their website at <https://www.backtoworksafely.org/>.



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