



Employer Screening Recommendations for COVID-19 Pandemic

To help protect the public against the spread of COVID-19, Governor John Carney and Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) Director Karyl T. Rattay, MD, MS, recommend that all employers consider implementing daily employee screening.

*Note: This document was updated on **June 16, 2021** to reflect [recently updated guidance](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*

Consider conducting daily in-person or virtual health checks (e.g., symptom and temperature screening) of employees before they enter the facility. Screening and health checks are not a replacement for other protective measures such as social distancing, mask wearing (unless respirators or facemasks are required), and engineering controls, including proper ventilation. Symptom and temperature screening cannot identify people with SARS-CoV-2 infection who are asymptomatic (do not have symptoms) or are pre-symptomatic (have not developed signs or symptoms yet but will later).

For **in-person health checks**, conduct them safely and respectfully and in a way that maintains social distancing of workers in and entering the screening area. Workers should not enter the worksite past the screening area if any of the following are present:

- Symptoms of COVID-19 (fever or shaking chills, cough, shortness of breath, severe sore throat, loss of taste or smell, or muscle aches) or nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, or headache, congestion or runny nose.
 - If symptoms are present, but symptoms have a known cause (allergies, asthma, COPD, chronic sinusitis, etc.), employer or medical personnel should weigh risks for COVID-19 exposure and may consider sending employee home.
- Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) or higher or report feeling feverish
- Undergoing evaluation for SARS-CoV-2 infection (such as pending viral test)
 - Note: this does not apply to individuals with pending viral tests for asymptomatic screening or surveillance purposes, such as routine weekly testing or testing before travel.
- Diagnosis of SARS-CoV-2 infection in the prior 10 days
- Close contact to someone with SARS-CoV-2 infection during the prior 14 days
 - Note: this does not apply to individuals who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, except those living in a congregate setting — see DPH guidance for Interim Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People.

For **virtual health checks**, encourage individuals to self-screen prior to coming onsite. An electronic monitoring system could be implemented in which, prior to arrival at the facility, employees report absence of fever and symptoms of COVID-19, absence of a diagnosis of SARS-CoV-2 infection in the prior 10 days, confirm they have not been exposed to others with SARS-CoV-2 infection during the prior 14 days, and confirm they are not undergoing evaluation for SARS-CoV-2 infection such as pending viral test (nucleic acid amplification test or antigen test).

To prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace, make employee health screenings as private as possible. Do not make determinations of risk based on race or country of origin and be sure to maintain confidentiality of each individual's medical status and history.

Ensure personnel performing in-person screening activities are appropriately protected against exposure to potentially infectious workers entering the facility. Methods known to reduce risk of transmission include social distancing, physical barriers, and mask wearing. If social distance or barrier controls cannot be implemented during screening, personal protective equipment (PPE) can be used when the screener is within 6 feet of an employee. However, reliance on PPE alone is a less effective control and may be more difficult to implement when there are PPE shortages, and given PPE training requirements. Ensure screeners are trained on proper use and reading of thermometers per manufacturer standards; improper calibration and use can lead to incorrect temperature readings.

Below are examples that can be incorporated into the in-person screening process.

- **Social Distancing:** Ask employees to take their own temperature either before coming to the workplace or upon arrival at the workplace. Upon their arrival, stand at least 6 feet away from the employee and:
 - Ask the employee to confirm that their temperature is less than 100.4° F (38.0° C)
 - Make a visual inspection of the employee for signs of illness, which could include flushed cheeks, sweating inappropriately for ambient temperature, or difficulty with ordinary tasks
 - Screening staff do not need to wear PPE if they can maintain a distance of 6 feet; however, screening staff should wear masks.
- **Barrier/Partitional Controls:** During screening, the screener should stand behind a physical barrier, such as a glass or plastic window or partition, that can protect the screener's face and mucous membranes from respiratory droplets that may be produced when the employee sneezes, coughs, talks, or breathes. Upon arrival, the screener should wear a mask and wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or, if soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. For each employee:
 - Make a visual inspection of the employee for signs of illness, which could include flushed cheeks, sweating inappropriately for ambient temperature, or difficulty with ordinary tasks.
 - Conduct temperature and symptom screening
 - Put on disposable gloves.

- Check the employee's temperature, reaching around the partition or through the window. Make sure the screener's face stays behind the barrier at all times during the screening.
 - **Contact thermometers need to be cleaned and disinfected after each screened employee** according to manufacturer's instructions and facility policies. Non-contact thermometers should be cleaned and disinfected according to manufacturer's instructions and facility policies.
 - Remove and discard gloves, and wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds between each employee. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
 - If disposable or non-contact thermometers are used and the screener does not have physical contact with the individual, the screener's gloves do not need to be changed before the next check. Gloves should be removed and discarded if soiled or damaged. Gloves should not be worn continuously for more than for four hours. After removing gloves, screeners should wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. Gloves should be removed and discarded anytime they are soiled or damage.
- **PPE:** Screeners need to be trained on how to properly put on, take off and dispose of all PPE. Upon arrival, the screener should wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol and put on a facemask or respirator, eye protection (goggles or disposable face shield that fully covers the front and sides of the face), and a single pair of disposable gloves. Extended use of a facemask or respirator and eye protection may be implemented. A gown could be considered if extensive contact with an employee is anticipated.
 - Make a visual inspection of the employee for signs of illness, which could include flushed cheeks, sweating inappropriately for ambient temperature, or difficulty performing ordinary tasks.
 - Conduct temperature and symptom screening
 - If performing a temperature check on multiple individuals, **the screener should change their gloves and wash their hands or use hand sanitizer** with at least 60% alcohol **between each employee.**
 - **Contact thermometers need to be cleaned and disinfected after each screened employee** according to manufacturer's instructions and facility policies. Non-contact thermometers should be cleaned and disinfected according to manufacturer's instructions and facility policies.
 - If disposable or non-contact thermometers are used and the screener does not have physical contact with the individual, the screener's gloves do not need to be changed before the next check. Gloves should not be worn continuously for more than for four hours. After removing gloves, screeners should wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
 - Any PPE, including gloves, facemask, respirator, eye protection, and gown, should be removed and discarded if soiled or damaged.

Remember to continue to follow preventative measures no matter how many employees are in the office – physical distancing, stay home when sick, use cough and sneeze etiquette, and practice hand hygiene as often as possible. Clean all high-touch surfaces regularly. For more information, visit de.gov/coronavirus.

Individuals with questions about COVID-19 should call Delaware 2-1-1; individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing can text their ZIP code to 898-211, or email info@delaware211.org. Medically related questions regarding testing, symptoms, and health-related guidance can be submitted by email at DPHCall@delaware.gov. Questions related to vaccination can be submitted to vaccine@delaware.gov.