

NCTCOG INITIAL PHASE REOPENING GUIDELINES

The practices and protocols set out below are intended to allow a limited reopening of the NCTCOG offices in a safe manner in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. A committee comprised of representatives from each department developed and recommended these for adoption. They are designed as an incremental approach to eventually resume normal operations and reopen all facilities in a safe and effective manner.

In developing this document, guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Governor's Office, federal government, local officials, and health agencies has and will be continued to be utilized and followed. There must also be recognition that the situation is dynamic and continues to evolve daily and therefore these practices and protocols could change.

The primary objective is to open the NCTCOG campus in a strategic manner focused on the safety and health of staff.

Initial Reopening Phase

The initial reopening phase is prefaced on the premise that telework will continue to be the predominant strategy to limit physical staff-to-staff interactions and potential exposure to the virus. Caretaking responsibilities and personal health considerations further support a continued telework environment. ***Only those employees with a business need to be in the office, request to work in the office and have Program Director approval to return to the campus will do so during the initial reopening phase.***

Recommended Safety Practices

Physical distancing is required while on the NCTCOG campus which includes maintaining at least 6 feet distance from others to the extent possible. In workspaces where physical distancing is difficult or impossible, alternate arrangements (e.g., staggered work schedules, reconfiguration, etc.) should be made.

Employees are required to wear face coverings when entering and exiting the building as well as in all common areas (i.e., hallways, break rooms, restrooms, reception area, etc.). Staff can use their own mask or one that is provided by NCTCOG.

Employees are encouraged to regularly wash hands or utilize hand sanitizer to maintain safe hygiene. NCTCOG will ensure soap and hand sanitizer is available.

NCTCOG will work with building management to ensure regular detailed cleaning, with a focus on increased frequency of cleaning of regularly touched surfaces in common areas (e.g., doorknobs, stair handrails, elevator buttons, etc.) as well as bathrooms and breakrooms.

Employees are encouraged to regularly clean and disinfect surfaces in their own workspace (i.e., desk, keyboard, mouse, etc.) as time and available supplies permit.

Available technology (i.e., Teams) will continue to be utilized for the conduct of internal and external meetings. Further, all non-essential business travel, whether in or out of region, remains suspended.

Occupancy to the campus will be limited consistent with applicable federal, state, and local guidelines. No visitors will be permitted unless otherwise approved by the Executive Director.

Public meetings and Board/Committee meetings will continue to be conducted remotely utilizing available technology.

Employees must not gather or loiter in common areas. Breakrooms are available for individual usage and should not be used for congregating.

Employees who are physically able will utilize the stairs. NCTCOG will consider designating stairwells in Centerpoint Two (CPII) as up or down only except in the case of an emergency and, if implemented, recommend a similar plan to building management for Centerpoint Three (CPIII).

Elevator use will be minimized with an occupancy limit of two persons at any time.

All first-floor meeting rooms (“Vandergriff Conference Center”) will remain closed to internal and external use, unless otherwise approved by the Executive Director.

To the extent practicable, internal doors will be propped open in an effort to limit the number of surfaces employees must touch.

Signage will be posted throughout the campus to remind employees of requirements and recommended best practices.

In instances where employees must interact with external parties (i.e., first floor reception area) the installation of shields or other physical barriers will be considered.

Recommended Health Protocols

It is imperative to the safety of all employees that any employee who begins to exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 or believes they have been exposed to COVID-19 stay at home and promptly notify their supervisor and HR. Sick employees must follow CDC-recommended steps. Employees shall not return to work until the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments. Generally, you may end home isolation when you have had no fever for 72 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication), AND your symptoms have improved, AND at least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared. Notify your supervisor and HR, who will coordinate with the Program Director to approve returning to work. NCTCOG reserves the right to send employees home that are sick, exhibit symptoms of sickness or are believed to be in violation of these guidelines.

Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 must notify their supervisor and HR and follow CDC recommended precautions.

If you have had potential exposure to COVID-19, including being in close contact with someone who has a diagnosis, do not report to NCTCOG or other worksite or participate in any work-related event. Contact your doctor or local health department to undergo a risk assessment, and follow the guidance given. Do not report to work until clearance is given by a health care professional or the health department. If you are unable to or do not visit a doctor or health department, you must self-quarantine away from the workplace for 14 days after the last exposure, as recommended by the CDC. Notify your supervisor and HR, who will coordinate with the Program Director to approve returning to work.

Employees who travel internationally or on cruise ships must notify their Program Director and HR in advance and quarantine for 14 days after arriving home, based on current CDC guidance.

Subsequent Phase(s)

Guidelines and recommendations for subsequent phase(s) will be developed by the Committee when, in the view of executive management, potential effects of COVID-19 on business operations warrant relaxed or strengthened practices. Any changes to guidelines or business practices will be communicated to employees with as much advance notice as practicable but not less than two weeks prior to implementation.