

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 other individuals who are present in legislative space. This policy 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. Capitol Police are responsible for assisting with the enforcement of the Legislative Council's COVID-19 Prevention Policy.

1. Access to legislative space; legislative staff offices. Legislative spaces are only open to legislators, staff and other individuals who have passed the daily health self-screening checklist described in section 6.

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 conducted in accordance with the requirements governing protective face coverings.

3. Managing physical presence of staff. To manage the number of staff members working together at the same time and increase safety, office directors are authorized to implement, where possible, staggered work shifts, remote work, and non-standard work hours as appropriate.

4. Remote attendance. In order to reduce the number of persons in any committee room and to increase the safety of staff and legislators, staffing support for committee meetings, including staffing by committee analysts and committee clerks, may 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 on-site as necessary.

In addition, a Legislator or another individual may choose to attend a committee meeting remotely through appropriate electronic means and be in the committee room for periods as necessary.

5. Protective Face Coverings.

A. Mandatory until March 6, 2022. Until March 6, 2022, 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 alone in their own office; (2) is in their own cubicle and able to socially distance at a minimum at 6 feet; or (3) is on the 3rd-floor balcony in the State House. For purposes of this section, “protective face covering” means a face covering that complies with guidelines or recommendations for COVID-19 source control issued by the Maine Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“MCDC”), except that if, due to medical necessity, a person must wear a face shield instead of a cloth or material face covering, “protective face covering” includes only those face shields that are worn so as to wrap around the sides of the face and extend below the chin, and includes only standard full-face shields and those alternative face shields that are pictured in Attachments 1 to 4.

B. Optional beginning March 7, 2022. Beginning March 7, 2022, an individual who enters legislative space may opt to wear a protective face covering while in that legislative space. In the event that Kennebec County is reclassified by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as having a high potential for health care system strain due to the COVID-19 virus, the Legislative Council shall meet to consider the reinstatement of the mandatory requirement of wearing protective face coverings while in legislative space.

6. 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 other individuals seeking entry to the State House or legislative space in the Cross Office Building 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 tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 14 days?

If a staff member answers "yes" to any of these questions that staff member must contact the staff member's 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 other individual seeking entry to the State House or legislative space in the Cross Office Building answers "yes" to any of these questions, the legislator or other individual shall refrain from entering legislative space.

7. 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.

8. 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, suzanne.gresser@legislature.maine.gov.

Adopted by the Legislative Council on March 3, 2022

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