

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health (BPH) continues to respond to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in West Virginia. BPH is working closely with communities, state agencies, local and federal partners to monitor the ongoing risk of COVID-19 and ensure the health and protection of all individuals in West Virginia.

To help prevent spread of COVID-19 at polling places, procedures and supplies should be in place to encourage proper hand and respiratory hygiene as well as routine cleaning and disinfection. This guidance is provided for any public or private facility that operates as a polling place to incorporate into their facility protocols. All polling places must follow the applicable sections of 64 CSR 114 - Public Health Standards for Businesses Remaining Open During the COVID-19 Outbreak.

COMMON SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- Recent loss of taste or smell

PERSON-TO-PERSON TRANSMISSION

- Occurs via small droplets from the nose or mouth of the infected person when they cough, sneeze, or exhale.
- Virus can remain on surfaces for a limited time period. Although less common, transmission may occur from touching contaminated surfaces and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

GENERAL PREVENTION

- Learn about COVID-19 from reputable sources.
- Maintain physical distance of at least 6 feet between yourself and others.
- Encourage proper handwashing.
- Clean and sanitize surfaces often.
- Do not share food, drinks, etc.
- Wear cloth face coverings.
- Stay home if you feel sick.
- Isolate sick individuals.

GENERAL PRECAUTIONS FOR POLLING LOCATIONS

- Polling locations should have bathrooms that are adequately supplied with soap, water, and disposable hand drying materials to allow for individuals to wash their hands.
- Polling locations should have a disease prevention protocol and clear instructions at the entrance of the polling location.

- Workers should not share food or beverages, and instead be encouraged to bring their own food and beverages. Adequate space should be reserved for workers to observe social distancing while eating meals and taking breaks.
- Workers should be supplied with and wear appropriate personal protective equipment to assist voters inside the polling locations and while assisting voters with disabilities at curbside voting pursuant to W. Va. Code § 3-1-34(e).

CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE ENTERING POLLING SITE

- Educate poll workers about when they should stay home and when they can return to work:
 - Workers who are sick, have tested positive for COVID-19, or have recently had a close contact with a person with COVID-19 should stay home. Ensure that poll locations are adequately staffed to cover any sick workers who need to stay home.
- Provide voters clear instructions before entering the polling station about protocols concerning:
 - Voters who are sick, have tested positive for COVID-19, or have recently had a close contact with a person with COVID-19 should stay home.
 - Alternative voting options are available, please contact your County Clerk's Office or the WV Secretary of State's Office for more information.

INDOOR FACE COVERING REQUIREMENT

- Effective July 7, 2020, all individuals over the age of 9 are required to wear face coverings when in confined, indoor spaces, other than one's residence or while actively engaged in the consumption of food and/or beverage, and when not able to adequately social distance from other individuals who do not reside in the same household, pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order 50-20.



INDOOR FACE COVERING REQUIREMENT CONTINUED

- Exempt from this requirement are:
 - Children younger than 9 years old,
 - Anyone who has trouble breathing, and
 - Persons who are unable to remove the face covering without assistance.

STOP THE SPREAD POSTERS

- Signs reinforcing the wearing of face coverings should be posted in prominent locations at the entrance and throughout the polling location. A face covering tool kit including downloadable signs can be found at: <https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Face-Covering-Toolkit.aspx>
- Signs reinforcing social distancing should be posted in prominent locations throughout the polling station, examples of which may be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc>
- Signs reinforcing good hand hygiene should be posted in prominent locations throughout the polling station. Examples of signs that may be used are available on the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing>

HAND HYGIENE

- Hand hygiene stations must be provided and maintained at the site.
- If soap and water are not readily available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol may be used. However, hand sanitizer is not effective on visibly soiled hands. Hands that are visibly soiled must be washed with soap and water.
- Hand sanitizing stations should be located near polling equipment with signage encouraging use before and after voting.
 - Consider placing hand sanitizer at the entrance of the site, at each station, and at the exit of the facility.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Signage promoting social distancing procedures should be posted in prominent locations.
- Sites must limit voter presence to 50% of the maximum occupancy for the area.
- Workers and voters must maintain a distance of at least six feet to the greatest extent possible. When a distance of less than six feet is required to

perform an activity within the polling location, a face covering must be worn.

- Social distancing of at least six feet should be maintained while voters wait in line.
- Workers should plan the flow of traffic through the polling place and utilize visual markers to ensure voters maintain proper social distancing.
- Consider designating a separate entrance and exit for the polling place.

ROUTINE CLEANING

- Time should be allocated for ongoing routine cleaning and disinfection and should occur at least daily. Frequently touched surfaces* must be cleaned and disinfected more often.
- Polling sites should ensure they have adequate cleaning and disinfection supplies to support routine cleaning efforts. Refer to the list of products identified by EPA as effective against COVID-19. <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

*Examples of frequently touched surfaces:

- Handrails
- Doorknobs and handles
- Desks, tables, and chairs
- Handles on equipment (e.g., carts)
- Shared computers, keyboards, mice, and other electronics
- Pens, pencils, styli, and other writing utensils
- Voting machines and e-poll books
- All kitchen and restroom surfaces

CONSIDERATIONS FOR WRITING UTENSILS

- Consider using disposable pens or pencils, or clean and disinfect pens and pencils between uses. Styli and other voting tools must be cleaned and disinfected between uses.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR VOTING EQUIPMENT

- Clean and disinfect voting machines, touch screens, and other voting equipment by following manufacturer instructions after use and/or provide gloves or hand hygiene stations for use before and after touching a machine.
- Consider using alcohol-based wipes or spray containing at least 60% alcohol to clean voting machine buttons and touch screens.
- Voting equipment should be frequently cleaned to prevent possible exposure.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROCESSING ABSENTEE BALLOTS

- Workers handling mail-in ballots should be provided with gloves and face coverings.
- Facilities where mail-in ballots are being counted must prominently post signage reminding workers to practice good hand hygiene. These facilities must also provide access to soap and water, as well as alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Areas where mail-in ballots are being counted should be cleaned and disinfected at least twice per day.

MORE INFORMATION

- West Virginia's COVID-19 webpage: <https://coronavirus.wv.gov>
- Governor Justice's webpage: <https://governor.wv.gov>
- CDC's Guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/election-polling-locations.html>

Questions and concerns can also be directed to the 24/7, toll-free COVID-19 information hotline:

1-800-887-4304

