



Domestic Violence Program Guidance – Stay Safe Ohio Order & Reopening Plan

MAY 17, 2020, version 2



This document is intended to provide guidance to Ohio Domestic Violence Programs for providing continued shelter, outreach, remote and virtual services during the COVID-19 pandemic and to offer services safely to both survivors and staff members. As Ohio begins to reopen some businesses and services, it is important to continue following the recommendations of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Ohio Department of Health (ODH). The following guidance includes recommendations from the new Stay Safe Ohio Order (As of May 1, 2020) as well as recommendations in purple font from ODVN on safe domestic violence shelter and program practices.

Stay at Home Order:

- All Ohio residents are ordered to stay at home with the exceptions outlined in the updated Stay Safe Ohio Order. [Stay Safe Ohio Order](#)
 - When individuals are utilizing shared or outdoor spaces, they must maintain social distancing of 6 feet apart [Floor Decals](#) (This is one decal option, there are many options available by searching for “Social Distancing Floor Decals”)
 - Residential services should continue to implement social distancing within shelter by staggering kitchen/meal time, playroom time, living room/TV time, and limiting the number of individuals/families in common areas
 - Whenever possible, one family per room is recommended
 - Individuals may leave their place of residence only to participate in activities, businesses or operations as outlined in the Stay Safe Ohio order
 - Comings and goings to and from the program or shelter should continue to be limited to essential activities and appointments as much as possible
 - Shelters are to use, to the extent possible, COVID-19 risk mitigation practices recommended by the CDC and Ohio Department of Health (ODH) [CDC Risk Mitigation](#)

Prohibited Activities:

- All public and private gatherings of any number of people occurring outside a single household are prohibited except for the limited purposes of the Stay Safe Ohio order.
 - Survivors should be discouraged from public or private gatherings, groups of more than 10 people, or socializing outside of visits to family members
- Any gathering of more than ten (10) people is prohibited unless exempted by the order
 - The order does not prohibit gatherings of household members, families or residences
 - Survivors and their children should be encouraged, whenever possible, to limit the number of visits (outside of the shelter) with family. This practice is to protect the survivor as well as the survivor’s family members
 - This section does not apply to weddings or funerals – wedding receptions are restricted to the 10-person limitation
 - This section does not apply to religious facilities, entities, groups or religious gatherings

- Survivors accessing services should not be prohibited from participating in religious services
 - Encourage shelter residents to use 6-foot social distancing and facial covering practices whenever attending any activity or appointment outside of the program or shelter
- For the purposes of this order, homes or residences include hotels, motels, shared rental units, shelters and similar facilities
 - Domestic Violence programs and shelters can continue to utilize the ODVN hotel program for sheltering residents when attempting to de-congregate shelter spaces and when appropriate and safe to do so

Prohibited and Permitted Travel:

- Individuals utilizing public transit must comply with social distancing to the greatest extent feasible
 - If possible, supply survivors and their children (except for children under 2) with facial coverings (masks) for any out of shelter activities or appointments
- The order permits travel into, and out of, the state of Ohio
 - Those entering the state and planning to stay are asked to self-quarantine for 14 days
 - If a survivor contacts your program or shelter from out of state and requests services or shelter, you may want to consider the ODVN hotel program to quarantine them for 14 days before bringing them into the shelter or program
 - This does not apply to those who live in one state and work in another
 - Those who have tested positive for COVID-19, are presumptively diagnosed with COVID-19 or are exhibiting symptoms identified in the screening guidance issued by the CDC and Ohio Department of Health shall not enter the state
 - For CDC, Ohio Department of Health and ODVN guidance on health screening questions please review [here](#)

Elderly people and those who are vulnerable as a result of illness should take additional precautions:

- People at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19, including elderly people and those who are sick are urged to stay in their residence to the extent possible except to seek medical care
 - Individuals meeting these criteria should be considered for the ODVN hotel program if appropriate and safe. See hotel guidelines [here](#)
- **According to the CDC those at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19 include people who are 65 years or older and people of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, including:**
 - People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
 - People with serious heart conditions
 - People who are immune compromised
 - People with severe obesity (Body Mass Index-BMI-of 40 or higher)
 - People with diabetes
 - People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
 - People with liver disease
 - Any survivor in these high risk categories should be heavily considered for hotel sheltering as permitted by the hotel guidelines unless the program has the capacity to isolate survivors within the shelter. Programs should evaluate with the survivor if the hotel program is an appropriate and safe fit for them.
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Facial Coverings (Masks):

- Businesses must allow all customers, patrons, visitors, contractors, vendors and similar individuals to use facial coverings, except for specifically documented legal, life, health or safety considerations. Businesses must require all employees to wear facial coverings except for one of the following reasons:
 - Facial coverings in the work setting are prohibited by law or regulation
 - Facial coverings are in violations of documented industry standards
 - Facial coverings are not advisable for health reasons
 - Facial coverings are in violation of the business's documented safety policies
 - Facial coverings are not required when the employee works alone in an assigned work area
 - There is a functional (practical) reason for an employee not to wear a facial covering in the workplace
- At a minimum, facial coverings (masks) should be cloth/fabric and cover an individual's mouth, nose and chin
 - It is recommended practice that staff and survivors, whenever interacting, should keep a physical distance of 6 feet. If physical distancing is not possible, individuals should wear a facial covering or mask when interacting with others.
 - Staff and residents should wear a facial covering or mask in any common area if physical distancing of 6-feet is not possible
 - If a resident or family is alone in their individual room, they should not be required to wear a facial covering or mask unless they choose to do so
 - Staff, if working alone in an assigned work area, do not need to wear a facial covering or mask unless required to do so by program administration
 - ***Please provide flexibility with residents who may be triggered with trauma responses due to the confining feeling of facial masks. If survivors do not wear masks per program suggestions, please have trauma-informed conversations with them rather than assuming non-compliance***
 - Survivors who have experienced suffocation, been strangled or experienced other forms of abuse that limit the availability to breathe, may not be able to tolerate wearing a mask or wear it for long periods of time
 - Some people have issues with claustrophobia and may find it difficult to wear a mask for long periods of time
- For purposes of the order, businesses include any for-profit, non-profit, educational entity, or governmental entity (other than federal)

General Office Environments:

- General office environments may reopen on May 4th
- Businesses should strongly encourage as many employees as possible to work from home by implementing policies in areas such as teleworking and video conferencing subject to the discretion of the employer
 - Programs and shelters should consider allowing staff to continue working from home if possible
 - Remote and virtual services should continue to be provided until the Stay Safe Ohio Order is amended or vacated

- If remote working and virtual services cannot continue, please consider staggering workers, adjusting shifts to reduce the number of staff present at one time and/or alternating days for staff members to work on site

Social Distancing Requirements:

- Social distancing requirements include maintaining at least 6-foot social distancing from others, washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as frequently as possible or using hand sanitizer, covering cough or sneezes (into the sleeve or elbow, not hands), regular cleaning of high touch surfaces, and not shaking hands
- **Required measures:** Businesses must take proactive measures to ensure compliance with Social Distancing Requirements, including where possible:
 - **Designate 6 foot distances:** designating with signage, tape, or by other means 6-foot spacing for employees and customers in line to maintain appropriate distance
 - When interacting with other staff members, adults or children in services, the 6-foot distance should be maintained whenever possible
 - Using floor decals (see link on Page 1), signage, or tape, common areas should be marked to indicate the distance that is preferred when interacting with others
 - **Hand Sanitizer and Sanitizing Products:** having hand sanitizer and sanitizing products readily available for employees and customers
 - Hand sanitizer should be placed in high traffic areas, commonly used spaces, at door entrances and all sinks
 - Soap and water, towels to dry hands, and other sanitizing products should be readily available throughout the program or shelter as much as possible
 - Cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer, and PPE equipment may be available through your local Emergency Management Agency (EMA) or by contacting your local Continuum of Care (CoC) [CoC Leads](#)
 - **Online and Remote Access:** Posting online whether a facility is open and how best to reach the facility and continue services by phone or remotely
 - Please continue to post your services and how to access them on your website and social media pages

Intent of the Order:

- The intent of the order is to ensure that the maximum number of people self-isolate in their places of residence to the maximum extent feasible to slow the spread of COVID-19
 - The order still designates Ohio residents to stay at home and minimize interactions and public places. Shelters and domestic violence programs should determine if they will permit survivors to resume overnight requests or to suspend them until at least the expiration of this order on May 29th and see what the state advises at that time.
- When people need to leave their places of residence to facilitate authorized activities as necessary, they should at all times comply with social distancing requirements

General COVID-19 Information and Checklist for Businesses/Employers: Businesses and employers are to take the following actions:

- Strongly encourage as many employees as possible to work from home by implementing policies such as teleworking and video conferencing
- Actively encourage sick employees to stay home until they are free of fever (without the use of medication) for at least 72 hours AND symptoms have improved for at least 72 hours AND at least 7 days have passed since symptoms first began. *Do not require a healthcare provider's note to validate the illness or return to work of employee's sick with respiratory illness*
- Ensure your sick leave policies are up to date, flexible, and non-punitive to allow sick employees to stay home for themselves, children, or other family members. Consider encouraging employees to do a self-assessment each day to check if they have any COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath) [Updated CDC Symptoms](#)
- Separate employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms from other employees and send them home immediately. Restrict their access until they have recovered
- Reinforce key messages – stay home when sick, use cough and sneeze etiquette and practice hand hygiene – to all employees, and place posters in areas where they are most likely to be seen. Provide protection supplies such as soap and water, hand sanitizer, tissues and no touch disposal receptacles for use by employees
- Frequently perform enhanced environmental cleaning of commonly touched surfaces, such as workstations, countertops, railings, door handles and door knobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label. Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces can be wiped down by employees before each use
- Comply with all applicable guidance from the CDC and Ohio Department of Health regarding social distancing

General Office Environments:

- Employees must perform daily symptom assessment that should include taking temperature with a thermometer and monitoring for fever. Also watching for coughing or trouble breathing
- Require regular hand washing by employees; Daily disinfection of common areas
- Reduce sharing of work materials
- Limit travel as much as possible – *for both staff and residents*
- Stagger arrival of all employees and guests
- Post signage on health and safety guidelines in common areas
- Frequent disinfection of desks, workstations and high-contact surfaces
- Cancel/postpone in person events when social distancing guidelines cannot be met
- Utilize disposable tableware
- Establish maximum capacity – *Please consider utilizing the ODVN hotel program to de-congregate shelter spaces.*
- Immediately isolate and seek medical care for any individual who develops symptoms while at work
- Conduct deep sanitation whenever possible

All persons are **ordered** to continue to stay at home or their place of residence unless they are engaged in essential activities, essential government functions or to operate essential and unrestricted businesses set forth in the order. **This order remains in effect until 11:59 pm on May 29.**