

LEGAL UPDATES

PUBLISHED: MAY 15, 2020

Maryland Strong: Roadmap to Recovery, Stage One

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On May 13, 2020, Governor Larry Hogan announced that Maryland will begin Stage One of its plan to reopen, Maryland Strong: Roadmap to Recovery, which will be effective at 5:00pm on Friday May 15, 2020. Stage One of the Roadmap to Recovery is a flexible, community-based approach to reopening that moves from a Stay at Home order to a Safer at Home advisory. County leaders are empowered to decide the timing of implementing Stage One. Best practices for safe reopen procedures have been provided for specific industries, including retail stores, manufacturing, faith-based communities, and personal services.

Individual advisory

Stage One strongly advises everyone to continue to stay home as much as possible, especially for people who are particularly vulnerable, including the elderly and those with preexisting conditions. People are also encouraged to wear masks in indoor public areas, in retail stores, and while using public transportation. Physical distancing, avoiding gatherings of more than 10 people, frequent handwashing, and sanitizing high-touch areas is also still encouraged.

Retail stores

Retail stores may open at 50% capacity and are strongly encouraged to use curbside pickup and delivery. Best practices are provided for reopening retail spaces to increase distance between people in stores, to keep the stores clean, and to train employees about the new workspace. Providing increased distance between all people present in stores is encouraged through modifying traffic flows, using sneeze guards and other partitions, and minimizing the use of high-touch areas. It is also recommended that interactions with vendors and the infrastructure of retail spaces are analyzed and adjusted to minimize the

risk of spreading the virus. Training employees about using masks, hand hygiene, and cleaning protocols are also recommended. If possible, retail stores are recommended to set aside hours for vulnerable populations. Additional signage and posting are provided to communicate that a store is complying with the recommendations and to assist patrons in appropriate behavior while in the store.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing facilities may operate, and the state has provided best practices to prepare for safe shift work, increased distancing, reduced use of high-touch areas, and increased cleaning. The facilities should prepare by designating separate workspace areas to encourage employees to stay in separate zones, by placing partitions to separate workers, by increasing ventilation and circulation of outdoor air, by removing doors where possible, and by providing PPE to employees. Facilities should also properly train employees about new procedures, offer teleworking when possible, and implement a daily screening process. To communicate the measures, manufacturing facilities are encouraged to share the safety procedures they are implementing with their supply chain and to post appropriate signage.

Faith-based gatherings

Religious services may be held at 50% capacity. Maryland's Faith-Based Workgroup provided recommendations for worship services that include distancing worshippers by seven feet, capping the total number of attendees to 250 people, and refraining from congregational singing. Face masks, temperature-taking, and sanitizing the space before and after the service are also recommended.

Personal services

Personal services, such as barber shops and salons, may reopen at 50% capacity by appointment only. Best practices for these businesses include preparing the space for increased cleaning, checking the HVAC and water systems in buildings that have been closed for long periods, providing crowd control and traffic pattern changes to limit close contact, and limit touch of retail inventory. Businesses should also plan ahead for vendor deliveries to limit exposure to customers and employees and set up workstations and sanitization stations to limit high-touch areas and increase cleaning. Employees should also be trained about proper procedures and sanitization requirements.

Contact us

If you have any further questions or require more information regarding this update, please contact Kyle Gilster, Julia Banegas, Charles Fleischmann or your Husch Blackwell attorney.

COVID-19 Return-to-Work resource

For the many businesses that partially or completely shuttered their on-site operations due to government-mandated COVID-19 orders, transitioning employees back to the workplace is an unprecedented and complex endeavor. Husch Blackwell's Return-to-Work Resource Center provides best practices, answers to common questions and potential issues to consider.