

Marquette County Reopening, Frequently Asked Questions

Last updated May 15, 2020

The Marquette County Health Department cannot give legal advice to anyone regarding the potential liability to any business, person, or organization that operates with, or without, adherence to these recommendations. Each individual should consult with his or her own legal counsel if they become ill at a business, event, or due to the actions of others. Likewise, you should consult with your own legal counsel if your business, event, or action contributes to the illness of others.

Do I have to open?

No. The decision to open is up to you. Though we support our businesses as they open to the public, we understand that there is uncertainty in doing so. Many are also concerned about the health of themselves, their families, and their staff; or would like to see how the first few weeks of reopening play out. It is perfectly alright to wait until you feel comfortable. If your concerns are related to applying safety guidelines in your business, the Health Department can help you troubleshoot your implementation plan, but you remain responsible and liable for your decisions. Getting “approval” of your plan by the Health Department does not guarantee you are exempt from liability.

What do I do if myself or my employees have symptoms of COVID-19?

You or your employee must comply with any quarantine or isolation order issued by the Health Department. In the absence of such an order, you can find CDC recommendations at this link:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html>.

Some items to consider are flexible leave options, allowing staff to work from home (if possible,) and sick leave policies.

If anyone working in your business is experiences any of the following symptoms, it is best practice to send them home until they have been symptom free for 3 days without medication.

Cough

Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

Or at least two of the following:

Fever

Chills

Repeated shaking with chills

Muscle pain

Headache

Sore throat

New loss of taste or smell

If your employee seeks testing, they will be instructed by a health care provider to quarantine and not return to work until they receive their results. If their test is negative, they are no longer experiencing symptoms of illness, and they are not under quarantine for a confirmed COVID exposure they may return to work. You should be familiar with employee’s leave rights under federal law – which applies to almost every employer, no matter how small: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-questions>

What happens if there is a positive case of COVID-19 identified at my business?

If this happens, it is critical that you work closely with the Health Department so an investigation can be completed quickly. The sooner the positive case and their close contacts are identified and safely quarantined at home, the sooner the business can complete the appropriate cleaning and can get back to normal operations.

A positive case does not automatically mean a business must close. When we are able to work cooperatively with our businesses we can prevent further spread and staff shortages.

Please note that due to confidentiality rules, we will not share information about investigations at your facility.

How can I protect my elderly or high-risk clients?

Implementing the safety recommendations provided by WEDC, the CDC and DATCP will go a long way in protecting all of your clients. Increased cleaning frequency and requiring all clients to wear masks, will also help.

If your operation allows for dedicated service hours, you may wish to devote specific operation hours to those populations. For added safety, consider scheduling these hours at the beginning of business operations when respiratory contaminants have settled, after the business has been cleaned but before the general public has entered the building.

Remember that following these recommendations does not guarantee you are exempt from liability. There are many factors to consider and each business needs to make, and is responsible for, its own decisions.

What if my customers will not wear a mask?

You can refuse to serve customers that will not wear a mask, as long as you do not enforce your rule in a discriminatory manner (such as only requiring people of a certain race or nation origin to wear a mask). Much like “no shoes, no service” you can refuse service to anyone, as long your reason is not unlawfully discriminatory. To help your customers with this, we recommend that you make you policy widely known, post signage, and have masks available (for free or for purchase.)

An exception to this policy might be necessary if your customer has breathing concerns that makes mask wearing difficult or dangerous.

If I’m not around other people at work or at home, do I have to wear a mask?

The current recommendation is to wear a mask while going out in public, such as shopping, attending appointments, etc. If you are not working in close contact with co-workers or the general public, the recommendations do not suggest that you wear a mask all day. If you are going to be putting your mask on and taking it off throughout the day, please be very careful not to touch your face and wash your hands after touching the mask.

The WEDC guidance recommends businesses utilize non-cash transactions, but I don’t have the capability to use credit or debit?

Currently, there is no rule or law requiring you to utilize non-cash transactions. Each business is responsible for its own decisions. Cash transactions increase the likelihood of contamination. You can reduce this risk by dedicating one staff person to the register. That person should avoid touching the customers hands during transactions and should clean/sanitize the register and counter regularly, wash hands before touching their face or moving on to another task (i.e. food service). Following this rule does not guarantee that you are exempt from liability.

Can we open our salad bars and self-service operations even though the WEDC guidelines do not allow them?

Yes. However, it can be difficult to clean and sanitize these areas frequently enough to prevent the spread of disease, so we continue to recommend that they remain closed. You are responsible and liable for your decisions regarding your operations. That said, if you choose to allow salad bars and self-service operations, consider the following guidance:

- Install hand sanitizer immediately adjacent to the self-serve area.*
- Increase cleaning and sanitation frequency.*
- Only allow the use of disposable cups provided by the facility.*
- Have an employee prepare beverages for customers.*
- Provide plates and silverware at the table rather than at the buffet.*
- Switch out salad bar utensils more frequently than the required 4 hours, especially when in high-use.*

What about Pools and Recreational Education Camps?

DATCP is working on guidance to help our Camp and pool operators navigate the coming months. Please check the Marquette County Government COVID-19 page for updates.

If you have additional questions, please contact the Marquette County Health Department at:
(608)297-3135 or healthinfo@co.marquette.wi.us