



# Keep Buffalo Niagara Working

A Guide to Reopening Your Business

BUFFALO NIAGARA  
**PARTNERSHIP**

OUR REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Best Practices from Local Employers  
& NYS Industry Compliance



## WELCOME

to the **Keep Buffalo Niagara Working** initiative from the Buffalo Niagara Partnership, here to help you in planning to reopen your business as safely as possible while continuing to protect your employees and customers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have created your one source to access the latest information, guidelines, and resources to find answers to your questions and recommendations for taking on the challenges you face in reopening. We bring together connections to CDC guidelines, New York state specific requirements and other leading sources, as well as unique insights from Partnership members gained through industry best practice sharing and our exclusive webinar series with New York State Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul.

We will continually update this document in real time as new information and resources become available, so please check back often. We have organized sections to make navigation as easy as possible, with specific links, general guidelines, and industry specific information.

No doubt, these are unprecedented times for all of us. By working together, we can demonstrate once again what makes the Buffalo Niagara business community so exceptional. Everyone at the Partnership is proud to play a role in helping to meet the challenges.

**IMPORTANT NOTES:** *The Buffalo Niagara Partnership provides this content for informational purposes only to assist our members and the business community in navigating the COVID-19 pandemic. Please follow official guidance provided by local health authorities and government officials when developing reopening plans to meet the unique needs and requirements of your location, industry, and workforce population. You will find convenient links to such guidance in content that follows.*

**Information and guidelines from New York State are changing day by day. The Buffalo Niagara Partnership encourages you to regularly visit the [Reopening New York](#) website for the most current details related to your industry.**



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## 1. OFFICIAL NYS REOPENING GUIDELINES, AFFIRMATION, & SAFETY PLAN TEMPLATE

New York State has produced detailed guidance for all industries allowed to reopen. The guidelines also contain a Business Affirmation Form that allows a business to acknowledge it has read the guidance and understands its obligation to operate accordingly.

### Links to Summary Guidelines and Affirmation Forms by Industry:

- **Manufacturing**
  - [Summary Guidelines](#)
  - [Affirmation Form](#)
- **Construction**
  - [Summary Guidelines](#)
  - [Affirmation Form](#)
- **Retail – Curbside Pickup Only**
  - [Summary Guidelines](#)
  - [Affirmation Form](#)
- **Wholesale Trade**
  - [Summary Guidelines](#)
  - [Affirmation Form](#)
- **Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting**
  - Summary Guidelines: [Agriculture](#), [Forestry](#), [Fishing](#) and Hunting
  - Affirmation Forms: [Agriculture](#), [Forestry](#), [Fishing](#) and Hunting

Having a written, clear, and available reopening safety plan is a critical part of the reopening process. New York State has provided a [Business Safety Plan Template](#) for employers to use. Employers in subsequent industry phases should begin to prepare their reopening safety plan now.

The Partnership has produced a step-by-step video tutorial on the action steps employers need to take to be in compliance with the state’s reopening protocols. [Watch it here.](#)



## 2. LINKS TO RESOURCES

[Official NYS Reopening Guidelines and Affirmation Submission Link – Phase 1](#)

[NYS Reopening Safety Plan Template](#)

[CDC COVID-19 website](#)

[OSHA COVID-19](#)

[EEOC COVID-19](#)

[U.S. Chamber of Commerce - Reopening Business Digital Resource Center](#)

[U.S. Chamber of Commerce – Employee Screening Questionnaire](#)

[New York State Resources](#)



## 3. GENERAL COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR BUFFALO NIAGARA EMPLOYERS

The Buffalo Niagara Partnership has carefully examined a host of resources including the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), New York State agencies, and other expert sources to bring you important guidelines in one convenient place.

Please keep in mind, these are necessarily general. For additional information, we encourage you to read the appropriate guidelines as they relate to your specific industry. Also visit the [CDC website](#).

### a. HOW TO KEEP EMPLOYEES HEALTHY

Your employees are your greatest asset and helping them stay healthy is one of the best investments you can make as the Buffalo Niagara business community moves forward in reopening. While many of the following guidelines may seem to be common sense, it is worth reviewing them and reminding ourselves of their importance.

#### Hand Washing

From the very beginnings of the pandemic, the CDC stressed the critical importance of proper hand washing in fighting the spread of the virus. Your reopening plans should include continual communication with employees on hand washing [protocol](#).

- Wash hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol if soap and water are not readily available.
- Utilize wall-mounted hand sanitizer dispensers where possible, especially near elevators, shared kitchen areas, restrooms, conference rooms, and other high touch areas.



- Hand washing must be performed:
  - After use of the restroom
  - Before and after food preparation
  - Before and after work breaks
  - Before and after work shifts
  - After touching objects from outside the workplace such as deliveries, items handled by customers, or visitors
  - After handling trash, including waste baskets or garbage cans
  - After an individual sneezes, coughs, or touches their nose or mouth

## Social Distancing

Key to fighting the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace is social distancing among employees wherever possible. Of course, every workplace is different, and this can be challenging for many companies and organizations. However, there are several strategies your business can employ to help maintain a safer work environment:

- Maintain distance of at least six feet between employees whenever possible
- Instruct employees to avoid large gatherings in one space
- Increase physical space between employees and workstations wherever possible
- Use floor markings and signage where possible as reminders to social distance
- Install plexiglass shields or similar partitions if possible
- Allow flexible work schedules, staggered shifts, and staggered arrival times
- Continue work from home protocols if possible
- Utilize teleconferencing systems for meetings to avoid large gatherings in one space
- Deliver services remotely by phone or web
- Deliver products with curbside pick up
- Postpone non-essential meetings, events, and travel if possible



## Masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

According to the CDC, a mask or cloth face covering may prevent people who don't know they have the virus from transmitting it to others. Therefore, use of masks is a good precautionary measure for any reopening plan if possible.

New York's Phase 1 guidance mandates that employers provide face coverings to employees at no cost and maintain an adequate supply onsite. Acceptable face coverings include but are not limited to cloth (e.g. homemade sewn, quick cut, bandana) and surgical masks, unless Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is required for the profession.

But remember, such face coverings are not surgical masks or respirators and the CDC notes cloth masks will not prevent the virus from infecting an individual.

The CDC does not recommend the use of PPE in workplaces where it is not routinely recommended. Strategies such as hand washing, and social distancing protocols are more effective at preventing exposures than wearing PPE. A list of regional companies manufacturing and/or supplying PPE can be found [here](#).

## Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols

Employers need to review their cleaning policies and procedures and increase the amount of cleaning if necessary. Some considerations to keep in mind include:

- Normal routine cleaning with soap and water removes germs and dirt from surfaces and lowers the risk of spreading COVID-19 infection.
- Increasing the number of scheduled cleanings – i.e. after closing, between shifts, throughout the day – can help lower the risk.
- Follow instructions on the label for disinfectants and other cleaning products.
- Practice more regular cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces – door handles, elevator buttons, light switches, faucets, shared spaces, countertops, etc.
- Follow manufacturers' instructions for cleaning computer keyboards, copy machines, touchscreens, and other electronics.



- When cleaning and disinfecting, employees should always wear gloves and gowns appropriate for the chemicals being used.
- If you employ custodial staff and others who carry out the cleaning and disinfecting, ensure they use proper PPE. This protects them not only from the cleaning chemicals but also the added risk they may face in carrying out their duties.
- Should you desire to have your place of work professionally cleaned we have a list of local companies [here](#).

## b. COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

COVID-19 presents a wide range of symptoms from mild to severe illness. Employers should be aware of the most common symptoms that may appear from 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus. These include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Chills, often accompanied by shaking
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea, nausea and/or vomiting
- Loss of taste or smell

Unfortunately, individuals may also have the virus and not show any symptoms, called asymptomatic. All the more reason to follow protocols aimed at keeping every employee safe and healthy.



## Seeking Medical Attention

If an employee develops any of the following emergency warning signs for COVID-19, they should seek medical attention immediately:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- Confusion
- Bluish lips or face
- High and/or persistent fevers
- Inability to eat or drink
- Worsening symptoms

Please note, there may be other emergency warning signs and this is not intended to be a complete list. Consult with a physician or medical professional for other symptoms that may appear as a warning sign.

## **c. EMPLOYEE/VISITOR SCREENING PROTOCOLS**

Employers have the legal authority to establish COVID-19 safety and facility screening protocols. Consistent with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and New York State guidance, employers must develop and implement procedures to screen employees and visitors for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 daily, upon their arrival, as feasible.

These protocols should include specific provisions for employees, visitors, suppliers, and subcontractors as each group may access the building at different times and in different ways. Procedures should include regular monitoring of symptoms and temperature of employees and visitors after they gain access to the facility if possible.

Employers should advise employees to check their temperature at home before reporting to work and be advised to put on a cloth face covering, regardless of symptoms, before leaving their home. Health assessments conducted away from the workplace are the safest and most



effective option. Employees should also notify the facility before arriving if they have a fever or symptoms of COVID-19. If they have symptoms, they should discuss them with a healthcare provider before arriving. As part of a reopening plan, facility screening protocols may include:

- Distribution of a home pre-screening questionnaire to assess symptoms before employees travel to work. You'll find a helpful CDC screening tool [here](#).
- Implementation of an employee health screening questionnaire for employees returning physically to work. A template can be found [here](#).
- Signage prior to entering the worksite reminding employees and visitors of the symptoms that require screening.
- Temperature screenings of employees and visitors before they enter the facility. These screenings can:
  - Reduce exposure for other employees and healthcare personnel
  - Help prevent the spread of disease within the facility
  - Help ensure PPE is used effectively
  - Detect a fever, as defined by the CDC as a temperature of at least 100.4
- Signage that affirms the completion and certification of a [NY Forward Safety Plan](#).
- Signage encouraging employees and visitors to wear a mask before entering the site.
- Signage encouraging employees to maintain the social distancing standards set for the facility.
- Signage encouraging employees and visitors to wash their hands immediately upon entering the facility.

Suppliers of body temperature scanners as well as information on contract medical staff can be found [here](#).

To protect themselves against liability, employers should document their screening process and maintain a log for each employee. A template can be found [here](#).



## d. WHAT IF AN EMPLOYEE HAS COVID-19 SYMPTOMS?

If an employee is displaying or complaining of COVID-19 symptoms, immediate action should be taken.

- Without delay, separate employees who appear to have symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) upon arrival at work or who become sick during the day
- Employees showing symptoms should be sent home and instructed to contact a healthcare professional regarding next steps for evaluation and treatment
- If an employee is confirmed to have a COVID-19 infection, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace
- You must maintain confidentiality, as required by the EEOC and ADA, to remain in compliance with the law
- Instruct employees about how to proceed based on guidance from the CDC and local health officials, which may include self-isolation and testing

## e. COVID-19 TESTING

Western New York has several COVID-19 testing facilities. Updated information from New York State and Erie and Niagara counties including test site locations, hours of operation, and contact information can be found [here](#).

According to the CDC, there are currently two kinds of tests available for COVID-19: viral tests and antibody tests.

**A viral test tells you if you have a current infection.** Viral tests check samples from your respiratory system (such as swabs of the inside of the nose) to tell you if you currently have an infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Some test results may be available at the testing site in less than an hour. Other tests must be sent to a laboratory to analyze, a process that takes one to two days once received by the lab.



**An antibody test tells you if you had a previous infection.** An antibody test may not be able to show if you have a current infection, because it can take one to three weeks after infection to make antibodies. Health professionals do not know yet if having antibodies to the virus can protect someone from getting infected with the virus again, or how long that protection might last.

## **f. WHEN CAN AN EMPLOYEE RETURN TO WORK AFTER A COVID-19 DIAGNOSIS?**

As the medical and scientific community learns more about COVID-19, recommendations and guidelines for isolation continue to evolve. If you have an employee who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the Partnership recommends you review the CDC website regularly for the most up to date information. In the meantime, to help you get started in determining the employee's return, here is a summary of some general guidelines regarding discontinuing isolation.

### **For Persons with COVID-19 Under Isolation AT HOME:**

The CDC recommends a couple of possible options to discontinue self-isolation for employees who have been diagnosed with COVID-19.

**OPTION 1** – The *non-test-based strategy* bases recommendations on the time since the person initially AND most recently had symptoms of COVID-19. Individuals with COVID-19 who have symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation if **all** of the following conditions have been met:

- At least three days (72 hours) have passed *since recovery* defined as absence of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications
- Improvement in cough, shortness of breath, and other COVID-19 symptoms
- At least seven days have passed *since symptoms **first** appeared*

**OPTION 2** – The *test-based strategy* recommendations rely on the availability of testing for the COVID-19 virus. Employees who have COVID-19 symptoms **and** were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation when **all** of the following



conditions have been met:

- Absence of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications
- Improvement in cough, shortness of breath, and other COVID-19 symptoms
- Negative results of an FDA-authorized molecular test for COVID-19 (i.e. no COVID-19 virus detected) from at least two consecutive tests collected at least 24 hours apart for a total of two negative specimens

Persons with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had **any** symptoms may discontinue isolation when all of the following conditions have been met:

- At least seven days have passed since the date of their **first** positive COVID-19 diagnostic test
- They have had no subsequent illness provided they remain asymptomatic

## **g. OTHER IMPORTANT HR INFORMATION & PRACTICES**

### **Employee Leave Programs**

Both the federal and state governments have created paid sick leave policies specifically related to COVID-19 depending on employer size. [New York's policy](#) pertains to employees under precautionary or mandatory quarantine. The [federal policy](#) is broader and pertains to employees who are under a precautionary or mandatory quarantine, seeking a medical diagnosis, caring for someone with COVID-19 symptoms, or unable to work (remote or otherwise) because they are caring for a child whose school or regular caregiver is closed. The federal leave program is reimbursable.

### **Recalling Employees Following a Layoff**

Employers who are recalling employees from a layoff or unpaid furlough as economic conditions improve should document the recall offer. If an employee declines the offer, the employer should document that communication to properly contest unemployment insurance. A template for a Job Refusal Checklist form can be found [here](#).



## 4. BUFFALO NIAGARA BEST PRACTICES BY INDUSTRY

The Buffalo Niagara Partnership has had the great honor of collaborating with our valued members, representatives from Empire State Development, and New York State Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul on a series of webinars that address the COVID-19 pandemic and its challenges for specific industry sectors as we plan for reopening in the days ahead.

New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo appointed Lt. Governor Hochul to spearhead the regional reopening of Western New York and the Partnership would like to express our gratitude for her leadership and her time and energy in working with us on the webinar series.

The series was not only a forum for our members to share ideas and best practices for reopening plans, it also offered an opportunity to provide feedback to our government leaders from the Buffalo Niagara business community. We thank all of the Partnership members who participated in the series and encourage every member's participation as we continue to move forward.

You can learn about best practices gleaned from the series and find links to the latest information on reopening from New York State for specific industries by clicking on the list that follows.

We learned a lot from the webinar series, but more importantly, we were reminded of something we already knew – the Buffalo Niagara business community has a unique spirit of collaboration and cooperation that will see us through the pandemic. The Buffalo Niagara Partnership is proud to be a part of it.



## a. MANUFACTURING

### Best Practices in Buffalo Niagara

Thank you to the following participants for taking the time to meet with Lt. Governor Hochul and share their ideas to help us all in planning to **Keep Buffalo Niagara Working**.

- EWI, Dominic Myers
- Harmac Medical Products, John Somers
- International Paper, Pamela Riggins
- International Paper, Gretchen Spear
- Linde PLC, Jessica Christensen
- Linde PLC, Terry Bourgeois
- Maclean Fogg, Paul Hojnacki
- PowerDrives, Inc, Louis Panzica
- Praxair Inc (a Linde company), Chris Faulkner
- Rexel USA, John Conway
- Sonwil Distribution Center, Jim Manno
- SoPark Corporation, Rupa Shanmugam
- STI-CO Industries Inc, Laura Schmitz
- Tapecon, Kevin Higgins
- Zenger Group Inc, Steve Zenger

### Adjusting Workplace Hours and Shift Designs

Several area manufacturers have adjusted their hours and shift times to help with employee safety and social distancing measures. Following are some of the best practices discussed in our webinar series:

- One manufacturer has switched to four-day, 10 hour shifts with half the group on a Monday through Thursday schedule, and the other half on a Tuesday through Friday schedule.
  - This reduces the density of employees on Mondays and Fridays and contributes to social distancing practices.



- All office staff who can work from home do so.
- One plant's second shift is smaller, so first shift workers were offered an opportunity to move to the next shift to help in reducing density on the first shift. The opportunity was completely voluntary and open to any shift worker.
- A manufacturer split up lunch and break times from one standard time to three different times. In between each time, the lunch area was cleaned and sanitized.
- Companies with the space have limited seating to one person per table with appropriate distance in between.
- Companies have also eliminated shift overlap which for many was approximately 15 minutes.

## Health Screenings

New York State had recommended regular health screenings at manufacturing facilities that were deemed essential businesses as a way of maintaining the safety of employees. Here are some examples of best practices in health screenings at local manufacturers.

- Companies are relying on self-health checks for employees who have the technology to interface with a self-health check point.
- In some cases, a number of non-contact thermometers have been made available to allow employees to perform their own temperature checks.
- A tracking system records the temperature checks.
- A second approach requires outside contractors to complete a questionnaire upon each arrival to screen for health before entering the facility.
- At another manufacturer, a tent has been constructed around the entrance to the facility that allows employees to remain six feet apart when entering the workplace.
- Another manufacturer has trained supervisors to do temperature screenings as employees enter the building.
  - The supervisor remains behind a plexiglass shield with a face mask and I-95 respirator to take the employee's temperature.



- Employees are also encouraged to take their temperature at home before they come to work. If they show any sign of a fever, they are told not to report to work.
- A plant with more than 50 employees may need to hire outside help to perform screenings. One manufacturer has initiated digital temperature checking by hiring outside nurses, which has relieved management from having to perform this task.

## Social Distancing

Social distancing measures are perhaps more important in a manufacturing setting than in public, as space can be limited. Several area companies shared their procedures and practices instituted for the safety of employees.

- Several companies initiated visitor restrictions, eliminating all non-critical visits to their plants.
- They have also consolidated and closed ancillary entry points to the plants, leaving them available only for emergencies.
- Shift changes and break times have been staggered to eliminate congregations of employees in any one area.
- Lunch and break room tables and chairs have been reduced to enable more distance between the furniture.
- Floor decals have been installed in high traffic areas as reminders to employees to keep a six-foot distance from one another.
- Capacity in restrooms and locker rooms is monitored to keep density down in smaller areas.

## Assuring Compliance

During the manufacturing webinar, Lieutenant Governor Hochul noted the importance of documenting procedures and practices and communicating with employees, including assigning a manager or supervisor to oversee compliance. Several Partnership members spoke about what they are doing in the area of compliance.



- At a local manufacturer, the CEO and the company's human resources manager share responsibility for seeing that employees are complying with procedures and practices for safety.
- Employees at the manufacturing plant are required to wear masks for the protection of other employees.
- If an employee has a concern or finds the mask claustrophobic, they can speak with the CEO or HR manager.
- If an employee cannot wear a mask, the company will try to isolate them in an area away from other employees.
- The manufacturer also documents which employees choose not to wear a mask, not as a disciplinary measure, but rather as a record of their choice and what the company did to accommodate them should a health issue arise in the future.

## Restricting Non-Essential Travel

- Most manufacturers have eliminated non-essential travel for their employees, including between multiple plant locations.
- Managers with site responsibilities are utilizing teleconferencing.
- If an employee travels on vacation, etc. they must be required to document where they have been, if they left the country, how long they were gone, and other items on a questionnaire.
- If an employee has traveled, they should be screened with a temperature check and must follow specific guidelines to return to the workplace according to CDC recommendations.



## b. CONSTRUCTION

### Best Practices in Buffalo Niagara

The robust audience of construction professionals noted that their industry has always followed strict protocols for safety, built into every process, which helps with reopening plans moving forward. Thank you to the following participants for taking the time to meet with Lt. Governor Hochul and share their ideas to help us all in planning to **Keep Buffalo Niagara Working**.

- Arc Building Partners, Vincent Kirsch
- Buffalo Construction Consultants, Joe Mannarino
- County Line Stone, Bradley Buyers
- D.V. Brown & Associates, INC, Omar Abdallah
- Ellicott Development, Kirk Fitscher
- Frey Electric, Salvatore Sciandra
- Grove Roofing Services, John Embow
- Hamburg Overhead Door, Jennifer Kuhn
- Industrial Power and Lighting Corp, George Schlemmer
- John W. Danforth Company, John Samar
- Marrano Homes, Jim Marrano
- Montante Construction, Douglas Elia
- NW Contracting, Nicole Savage
- PCS Plumbing & Heating Inc, Chris Tryjankowski
- Rodriguez Construction Group, Luis Rodriguez
- Romano Associates, Peter Romano
- RP Oak Hill Building Company Inc, Matt Famiglietti
- Turner Construction Company, Steven Perrigo
- Union Concrete Construction Corp, Gary Hill
- Upstate Steel, Lauren Chmielowiec



## Adjusting Workplace Hours and Shift Designs

Several area manufacturers have adjusted their hours and work site schedules to help with employee social distancing.

- Some are staggering starting times for different trades at the site to reduce density.
- Breaking large job sites into smaller work areas helps to better control the number of people in one area.
- Adding shifts as necessary can enable a 50/50 split of workers to reduce density.
- For tasks that don't allow six feet of social distancing, workers should be required to have all the necessary PPE, including masks.

## Social Distancing

Adjusting hours and shift designs can contribute to social distancing as noted above. Several members have also initiated physical measures to help with distancing protocols.

- Companies monitor and maintain the six-foot distance guideline, reminding employees and contractors on every shift.
- Most are reducing group gatherings at lunch and break times and eliminating food trucks on the sites.
- Avoiding ride sharing to the site among employees.
- No sharing of coffee makers, microwaves, and other shared appliances.
- Management teams continue to work from home wherever possible.
- Calls and conference calls are used in place of face to face meetings.
- For one construction business, the job sites are spread out, enabling control of the number of employees or contractors on any one site.
- Typically, there are no more than three to four workers on one job at any time and they wear proper PPE.
- Sanitizer is provided on site for employees and contractors.
- Signage on site reminds all workers of proper COVID-19 safety protocols.



## Restricting Non-Essential Travel

Of course, a certain amount of travel is necessary in the construction industry, but many Partnership members have taken steps to curtail it as part of safety protocols during the pandemic.

- Many companies have salespeople on the road all the time, however, most have eliminated all non-essential travel.
- Zoom chats and conference calls with customers are used in place of face to face visits.
- Any delivery drivers are required to wear masks and adhere to cleaning and sanitation protocols for the vehicles.
- Deliveries received at many companies are limited to outdoors so that outside drivers do not enter the building.

## Requiring Employees and Customers to Wear Masks

Masks – while they won't prevent infection in the individual wearing one – have proven effective in slowing the spread of the coronavirus and the construction industry has easily adapted.

- Companies are requiring all employees at company facilities and on job sites to wear masks. Most employees have easily made the transition since they are used to wearing hard hats, gloves, and other safety equipment.
- In addition to masks, companies have added hand sanitizer stations and extra wash stations for employees.

## Cleaning and Sanitizing Procedures

Partnership members in the construction trades have enhanced cleaning and sanitizing measures at their facilities and on job sites wherever possible.

- Companies are ensuring an appropriate number of wash stations to give all employees access.
- Any tools or equipment that are shared are disinfected after each use.
- Wearing gloves is required 100% of the time to minimize touching of surfaces.



- At remote job sites, rinse kits/wash kits are placed in company vehicles for employee use where wash stations may not be available.

## Continuous Health Screening

Keeping employees healthy means continuous health screening for many construction companies in Buffalo Niagara. Examples follow.

- Employees undergo training with the company's safety personnel to learn about in-house health screening requirements.
- Employees are also instructed on any safety requirements customers have put in place for health screenings.
- Companies have purchased equipment for in-house temperature checks of employees.
- Temperature checks are performed before the employees enter a site.
- Temperature checks are also performed a couple of times during the day.
- Toolbox talks are held on a regular basis specific to the areas in which employees will be working.
- Employees sign off on the safety procedures and topics covered during the toolbox talks as a record that the issues were covered.

## Tracing, Tracking and Reporting

Construction companies in Buffalo Niagara recognize the importance of tracing and tracking COVID-19 among employees as part of the fight against the virus. Here are some examples.

- A COVID-19 element has been added to employee orientations to reinforce safety procedures.
- Employees must also review a document to indicate if they have been exposed to the virus. The signed document is placed in a file as a record.
- Daily field reports generated by site managers now include information on COVID-19.
- If an incident does occur, the reports enable the company to track it and isolate areas if necessary.
- Daily communication and collaboration with contractors is performed.



- Contractors are to notify the company if exposure to the virus has occurred.
- COVID-19 precautions are now part of many company safety protocols and will remain so going forward.

## c. DEVELOPMENT

### **Best Practices in Buffalo Niagara**

According to New York State, development will be allowed to reopen in Phase 2. Many development professionals – both residential and commercial – have begun to prepare for reopening already. We will add more information as it becomes available, in the meantime some of the best practices are summarized below.

Thank you to the following participants for taking the time to meet with Lt. Governor Hochul and share their ideas to help us all in planning to **Keep Buffalo Niagara Working**.

- Ciminelli Real Estate Corp, Paul F. Ciminelli
- CPC, Michael DeWitt
- First Amherst, Ben Obletz
- Hamister Group, Daniel Hamister
- Iskalo Development Corp, David Chiazza
- Priam Enterprises, Paul Kolkmeier
- Sinatra Company and Essex Homes, Phil Nanula
- The Krog Group LLC, Scott Fairbrother
- Uniland, Carl Montante
- WSP, Fred Frank

### **Adjusting Hours and Shift Design to Reduce Density Among Employees**

The development community is taking a number of steps, including adjusting employee hours to reduce density. Many note the challenge of having a wide variety of business operations: from communicating with tenants in rental and leasing operations to working with contractors on construction management projects.



- Many development companies are involved in multiple categories that overlap, including construction management, leasing, and property management and have created procedures for reducing density across the categories where possible.
- Employees who can work remotely are doing so and teleconferencing is being utilized wherever possible.
- One developer has broken employees up into cross-functional teams with members from different departments. A playbook for the new team concept has been created that combines work from home protocols.
- Common spaces such as conference rooms and lunchrooms are reconfigured to enable social distancing when employees are in the office.

## Social Distancing

As with other safety practices, developers face the unique challenge of initiating procedures across multiple categories. Here's how some are creating solutions.

- A company that focuses on commercial and mixed-use buildings has distributed a 10-point memo to all tenants that covers best practices in social distancing such as building access, wearing mask, etc.
- iPads will be set up in the developer's building entryways to enable tenants and their employees to self-temperature check.
- Crowd control barriers have been installed to steer people to the security desk – where available – and iPad stations for taking temperatures.
- Separation markers have also been installed on floors in entryways and lobbies to promote social distancing.
- Companies have also issued memos asking tenants to ensure that no more than two people enter an elevator at the same time.



## Wearing of Masks

As with any business, masks have become an important tool in the developers' safety efforts. Enforcement can be a challenge, especially in multi-tenant buildings, still developers are taking steps to adhere to CDC guidelines for the wearing of masks.

- For most companies, all employees – who are not working from home – are required to wear masks in the company's facilities.
- Masks will be required of any delivery personnel who come into the building.
- Enforcement may be a concern – some companies have increased security personnel where possible.
- In buildings without security, developers are providing handbooks for tenants to follow similar protocols.
- Companies are in constant communication with tenants to remind them about the importance of masks when entering and exiting the building and have posted signage in all common areas.
- Where there is no security staff, developers reinforce the message to tenants to self-enforce the wearing of masks.

## Cleaning and Sanitizing

Like other safety procedures, Buffalo Niagara developers have stepped up cleaning and sanitizing efforts and communicated with commercial and residential tenants to do the same.

- At company facilities, developers have cleaning procedures to protect employees throughout the day as well as a final cleaning at the end of the workday.
- Common areas where tenants may gather are regularly cleaned and sanitized.
- Hand sanitizer is made available in common areas such as near elevators and near mailbox areas.
- Developers have also communicated with tenants on cleaning and sanitizing procedures and encouraged implementation of their own procedures.



## d. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

### Best Practices in Buffalo Niagara

Professional services in Buffalo Niagara – which include businesses such as financial companies, accounting and law firms, non-profits, and many others – will be allowed to reopen in Phase 2 according to New York State. We will add more information as it becomes available, in the meantime some of the best practices are summarized below.

Thank you to the following participants for taking the time to meet with Lt. Governor Hochul and share their ideas to help us all in planning to **Keep Buffalo Niagara Working**.

- 19 Ideas, Charlie Fashana
- Alerson Group/ Broadleaf Results, Lynne Marie Finn
- Bank on Buffalo, Marty Griffith
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- Benchmark Environmental Engineering, Paul Werthman
- Bonadio, Rocco Surace
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- Child & Family Services, Erica Reger
- Citibank NA, Robin Wolfgang
- Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, Clotilde Dedecker
- D'Youville College, Lorrie Clemo
- Delaware North Companies, Inc, William Hochul
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- HealthNow, Daniel Weinstein
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- Rich Products, Jon Dandes
- Try-It Distributing, Paul Vukelic
- Try-It Distributing, Robert Kolada
- United Way of Buffalo & Erie County, Michael Weiner
- Verizon Media, Paul Bonaro
- Visit Buffalo Niagara, Patrick Kaler



## Adjusting Hours and Shift Design to Reduce Density Among Employees

Like all businesses in Buffalo Niagara, professional services firms are taking a number of steps, including adjusting employee hours to reduce density. The diversity of companies within the Professional Services categories makes these practices necessarily general.

- At most professional services firms, all administrative staff members are working from home and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.
- Office redesign plans are underway for when employees do return, including designating one-way hallways, stairways designated for up or down traffic, etc.

## Restricting Non-Essential Travel for Employees

- Firms with offices across the state and country have eliminated all non-essential travel between offices.
- At most companies, any travel an employee chooses to take must be approved by human resources.
- Employees who do travel – especially to areas where COVID-19 cases continue to grow – must self-quarantine before returning to work.
- Firms are also monitoring and recording any employee travel.

## Wearing of Masks

Following CDC and state guidelines, professional services firms are instituting requirements for the wearing of masks within their offices.

- Firms are requiring all employees to wear a mask if they must be in the office – which is communicated continually.
- Any visitors such as delivery personnel must wear masks before entering the offices.

## Cleaning and Sanitizing Procedures

Professional Services firms in Buffalo Niagara have increased the amount and regularity of cleaning within their offices, which will be noted in reopening plans.

- Increased cleaning and sanitizing procedures have been implemented in most facilities.



- Employees who work outside facilities – for deliveries, etc. – are reminded to be diligent in their cleaning efforts – continually washing/disinfecting hands before entering and after leaving a customer site; wearing masks, sanitizing interiors of vehicles, etc.
- Employees are reminded to self-supervise their cleaning efforts.

## Continuous Health Screening

Continuous health screening of employees in Buffalo Niagara is a key weapon in stopping the spread of COVID-19 while protecting the health of the employees themselves. Here are examples of what some professional service firms are doing.

- Firms with multiple offices in different states are following health screening guidelines provided from all of those states.
- Employees are asked to self-screen at home before going to work, taking their own temperature.
- Following New York State guidelines, a local firm will send employees who present COVID-19 symptoms home to contact their health care provider for medical assessment and COVID-19 testing.
- If tested positive, the employee may only return after completing a 14-day quarantine.

## Tracing, Tracking and Reporting

Among the most complicated of safety procedures is the tracing, tracking, and reporting of COVID-19 cases among employees. The procedures will become easier as the state continues to increase capacity for tracing and diagnostic testing. In the meantime, local companies are taking steps within their organization.

- Many firms' procedures for health screenings dovetail with tracing and tracking.
- If an employee is found to have COVID-19, it is documented and recorded.
- Companies then follow the state-wide standards for tracing and tracking.



## e. RETAIL

### Best Practices in Buffalo Niagara

Some retail operations have opened in Western New York as part of Phase 1; however, these are limited to curbside pick-up or in store pick-up or drop off. Other retail operations in Buffalo Niagara will be allowed to reopen in Phase 2, while retail restaurants will open in Phase 3 according to New York State. The Buffalo Niagara Partnership will add more information to assist you as it becomes available.

## f. RESTAURANTS

### Best Practices in Buffalo Niagara

Some restaurants in Western New York have been open – considered essential businesses – but limited to curbside pick-up. Restaurants will be allowed to open in Phase 3 according to New York State. Guidelines for Phase 3 as established by NYS are not yet available. The Buffalo Niagara Partnership will add more information to assist you as it becomes available.

Thank you to the following participants for taking the time to meet with Lt. Governor Hochul and share their ideas to help us all in planning to **Keep Buffalo Niagara Working**.

- Butera's, Jimmy Butera
- Fat Bob's Smokehouse, Patrick Ryan
- Garage Café Lounge, Lisa Riniolo
- Glen Park Tavern, Ellie Grenauer
- Golden Parachute Catering, Phil Palmisano
- Ilio DiPaolo's Restaurant & Banquet Facility, Dennis DiPaolo
- Larkin Development Group, Leslie Zemsky
- Larkin Development Group, Harry Zemsky
- NYS Restaurant Association, Melissa Fleischut
- NYS Restaurant Association, David Cordaro
- OGP Hospitality LLC, Nick Pitillo



- Pizza Plant Italian Pub, Bob Syracuse
- Schutte Hospitality Group, David Schutte
- Soho FP39, Jay Manno
- Sole at Woodlawn Beach, Tom Frascella
- The Irishman Pub & Eatery, Maria MacPeek
- Toms Family Restaurant, INC, Dora & Eric Wisniewski
- Toutant, James Roberts
- Toutant and Dobutsu Restaurants, Connie Roberts
- Valley Community Association, Peg Overdorf

## Adjusting Hours and Shift Design

- Many restaurants in Buffalo Niagara are open for takeout after closing dining rooms in March.
- Food prep staff have been scheduled on different shifts, with one group in the early AM
- Once first shift work is done, everything is cleaned and sanitized before the next shift comes in.
- Cleaning and sanitizing of tools, equipment, counters, etc. takes place before and after each shift.
- In serving customers, only two employees are on per shift – one handles transactions and payments and the other handles orders and packaging and bagging.
- Many restaurants have shortened hours, for example from 12 to 8 PM.
- Pick-up windows are utilized for pick-up when possible.
- At one restaurant, the 12 to 4 shift requires fewer employees due to business volume.
- Starts have also been staggered to minimize staff congregating.

## Wearing of Masks

Restaurants open for takeout have followed CDC and state guidelines for the wearing of masks within their facilities. Most will continue to do so and are including the procedure in reopening plans.



- Many restaurants require all employees to wear a mask and gloves while working, especially if they have contact with the public and/or are preparing food for takeout.
- Restaurants note that service will be difficult with masks but opening later may allow the public to get used to masks.
- Restaurants are considering adding dividers and directing traffic patterns when opening.

## Cleaning and Sanitizing Procedures

- Restaurants note the strict cleaning and sanitizing standards the industry has always had to adhere to.
- Most are ramping up cleaning and will continually communicate that with customers upon reopening.

## Enhancing Social Distancing and Reducing Density

- While closed, restaurants have rearranged their kitchens to give employees more space and to meet social distance guidelines.
- Restaurants have shortened their menu to enable just two cooks to handle the orders while maintaining distance.
- Companies have also positioned tables to give employees more space between themselves and customers coming in for pick-up.
- Customers will be asked to enter the restaurant one at a time to pick up their orders.
- Outside the restaurant, sidewalk markings will ensure proper distancing while waiting in line.
- Customers can also wait in their cars and come up as people leave the restaurant.



## g. TOURISM & HOSPITALITY

### Best Practices in Buffalo Niagara

According to New York State, tourism and hospitality operations – from hotels to museums and other attractions – will be allowed to reopen in Phase 4. Guidelines for reopening in Phase 4 as established by NYS are not yet available.

Leading tourism agencies, hotels, tour businesses, and popular attractions in Buffalo Niagara are faced with some of the greatest challenges in reopening as these businesses rely on large concentrations of customers. These organizations have noted that they are carefully watching openings in the first three phases and adapting some of those practices. In addition, many franchise companies noted they are guided by franchise operations in other parts of the country and the world and are sharing best practices with smaller hospitality companies that may not be part of a franchise system. Some of those best practices are summarized below.

Thank you to the following participants for taking the time to meet with Lt. Governor Hochul and share their ideas to help us all in planning to **Keep Buffalo Niagara Working**.

- Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences, Marisa Wigglesworth
- Buffalo Zoo, Norah Fletchall
- Buffalo Zoo, Keesha Bullock
- Destination Niagara USA, Andrea Czopp
- Ellicott Hotels Inc., Tom Molenda
- Erie County Fairgrounds, Marty Biniasz
- Explore & More-The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Children's Museum, Michelle Urbanczyk
- Fashion Outlets Niagara Falls, John Doran
- Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House, Mary Roberts
- Gray Line Niagara Falls/Buffalo, Doreen Oconnor
- Hotel Henry/ The Mansion on Delaware, Diane Pricipe
- Hotel Lafayette, Steve Walsh
- Hyatt Place Buffalo/Amherst, Matt Chiazza



- Merani Hotel Group, Brett Stewart
- Old Fort Niagara, Robert Emmerson
- Rupal Hospitality, Nirel Patel
- Visit Buffalo Niagara, Cindy Kincaide
- Wingate by Wyndham/Quality Inn Niagara Falls, Frank Strangio

## Adjusting Hours and Shift Design

- Hospitality companies noted the challenge in adjusting hours in an operation such as a hotel that must be open 24 hours.
- Many have adjusted arrival times for guests as best as possible so that only one or two parties are arriving at the same time.
- Most hotels have eliminated breakfast and other buffets, reducing staff for these shifts, and are providing guests with individually boxed breakfast meals instead.
- An area family attraction has created two teams in which personnel will work with the same team for a full week.

## Social Distancing

- Hotels are asking guests to limit lines at the front desk to no more than one or two people and installed signs to remind guests about social distancing.
- At the front desk, shields have been installed to protect employees.
- Credit card units have been installed for customers to avoid touching credit cards.
- Key drops for checking out have been installed to eliminate handling of key cards.
- Receipts are provided to guests via e-mail.
- Pools and fitness facilities have been closed.
- Tour bus operators note, that while they are still planning in vehicle procedures, they may be able to help reduce density in parks and other areas by moving people around to various destinations.



## Wearing of Masks

- Tourism and hospitality companies are following CDC and state guidelines for the wearing of masks.
- Tour bus operators will require masks for all passengers, drivers, and other personnel.
- Hotels will utilize signage to remind guests of the use of masks according to CDC and state recommendations.

## Cleaning and Sanitizing Procedures

- Hospitality organizations note the already robust cleaning procedures in place for the protection and comfort of guests.
- Many are increasing cleaning and sanitizing procedures to three times per day or more.
- Museums and other attractions are planning more touchless exhibits for guests.