

BUSINESS *reopening* **HANDBOOK**

Information and resources for
Virginia businesses on how to
reopen after COVID-19





Introduction

As Virginia and other states begin to enter the “new normal” and balance business needs along with keeping team members safe from COVID-19, everyone agrees it’s important to be proactive and thoughtful in your planning. The VSCPA is monitoring the rapidly changing impact of COVID-19, compiling resources and making daily updates to our Coronavirus Resource Center at www.vscpa.com/Coronavirus.

Here are some of our curated resources and best practices for reopening and re-entry attributed to the organizations that developed them. These are designed to be a guide and not an authority — as each business is unique and has unique needs and considerations.

Please note: The guidance that follows was not created by the VSCPA, but instead is a compilation from business, health care, legislative and regulatory experts with knowledge of the virus and how it may impact a variety of parties. This information should be used as a guide only.

Returning to the Office

Non-retail businesses, including CPA firms, have generally been able to remain open under Virginia’s stay-at-home order with teleworking strongly encouraged. For those businesses remaining open, strict social distancing and sanitation and hygiene practices have been mandated. Regardless of whether you remained open or closed and are now looking to reopen your office, the goals should be:

1. Protecting the health and well-being of employees.
2. Maintaining business resilience.
3. Supporting broader public knowledge.

These critical factors should be taken into consideration by every business leader in the professional and financial services industry as they determine next steps for their workplaces.

Phases of Reopening in Virginia

Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam has released a [“Forward Virginia”](#) blueprint to help guide the Commonwealth on safely easing public health restrictions, which includes a phased approach based on guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and specific goals to contain the spread of the virus. The blueprint includes the following priorities:

1. Increased testing and tracing capacity
2. Stable personal protective equipment (PPE) supply chain
3. Sufficient hospital capacity and staff

Phase One

Phase One, also being referred to as “Safer at Home,” is outlined in [Executive Order 61](#) and allows for the easing of certain temporary restrictions. Businesses not specifically addressed in the order, including CPA firms, are directed to adhere to the governor’s *Guidelines for all Business Sectors*. Key highlights are below, but everyone is encouraged to review the [full text available online](#).

1. Physical distancing best practices:
 - a. Includes co-workers and members of the public
 - b. Provide clear signage in common areas
 - c. Limit occupancy
 - d. Continue to encourage teleworking
 - e. Utilize face coverings
 - f. Limit work-related gatherings
 - g. Keep in-person meetings as short as possible
2. Enhanced cleaning and disinfection best practices
 - a. Practice routine cleaning and disinfection of high contact areas and hard surfaces
 - b. Clean shared equipment before and after each use
 - c. Provide hand washing or hand-sanitizing stations for
 - d. Allow frequent breaks for hand washing/sanitization
3. Enhanced workplace safety best practices
 - a. Implement employee screening practices for temperature checks
 - b. Encourage employee use of screening questionnaires or symptom monitoring logs
 - c. Instruct employees who are sick to stay at home
 - d. Adopt flexible sick leave policies
 - e. Address risk exposure for vulnerable employees
 - f. Designate a staff person to respond to COVID-19 concerns
 - g. Implement staggered shifts if possible
 - h. Limit employees in break rooms and stagger breaks

Other important information related to Phase One is available [here](#).



Phase Two

Phase One will last at least two weeks before moving on to Phase Two, which is expected to last 2–4 weeks or longer and is expected to involve the following:

1. Stay-at-home order for vulnerable populations only
2. No social gatherings of more than 50 people
3. Continued social distancing
4. Face coverings recommended in public
5. Further easing of business limitations

Phase Three

As long as public health data supports it, Virginia can move on to Phase Three, also expected to last 2–4 weeks:

1. Safer at home for vulnerable populations
2. Remove the ban on social gatherings
3. Remove capacity limits on establishments
4. Continue heightened cleaning and disinfection
5. Possible other measures

Specific guidelines regarding Phases Two and Three have not yet been released. This guide will be updated as additional information becomes available.

Government Guidelines

- [What Does Reopening Actually Mean? Answers to Questions about Virginia's Phase One Virginia Business](#)
- ['Forward Virginia' Blueprint for Easing Public Health Restrictions](#) *Virginia Gov. Ralph S. Northam*
- [Workplace Guidance](#) *Virginia Department of Health*
- [Workplace Reopening Decision Tree](#) *CDC*
- [Reopening Guidance for Cleaning & Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes](#) *CDC*
- [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#) *CDC*

Legal & HR Considerations

- [Legal Considerations for Reopening Business in the Time of Coronavirus](#) *The National Law Review*
- [Reopening the Workplace – A Preliminary Guide for Employers](#) *Bloomberg Law*
- [What Not to Do When You Reopen Your Business to Reduce Liability](#) *Inc.*

Reopen Guides & Checklists

- [A Return to Work in the New Normal: How companies should plan to return to work and emerge from COVID-19 stronger and smarter](#) *BDO*
- [The Safe Six: Workplace Readiness Essentials](#) (PDF) *Cushman & Wakefield*
- [Recovery Readiness: A How-To Guide for Reopening Your Workplace](#) (PDF) *Cushman & Wakefield*
- [The 6 Feet Office](#) (video) *Cushman & Wakefield*
- [How to Reopen Your Business as Safely as Possible During COVID-19](#) *Virginia Council of CEOs*
- [The Post-Pandemic Workplace Will Hardly Look Like the One We Left Behind](#) *The Washington Post*
- [An Epidemiologist on What Steps to Take if You are Preparing to Reopen Your Business](#) *Fast Company*