



Real Estate Overview

According to [Governor Wolf's May 19th announcement](#) and [Pennsylvania's Phased Reopening Plan](#):

- In the “Red” and “Yellow” phases, businesses and employees in the real estate industry may conduct limited business provided they follow the specific state guidance on real estate operations in the Red and Yellow phases (outlined below).
- In the “Green” phase, businesses may continue to operate in person provided they follow general state and CDC guidelines. Telework is still recommended where possible.

Guidance [from the state](#) and from the [National Association of Realtors \(NAR\)](#) will help businesses meet or exceed state and CDC expectations while operating safely.

These materials and any related updates are provided and intended for general public informational purposes and guidance. While intended to be timely and accurate, please note that federal and state regulations and directives are changing often. To that extent, please continue to monitor this site for any significant modifications and developments.

Employer Tips and Guidelines

All businesses in the real estate industry, which includes real estate professionals, appraisers, notaries, title companies, settlement service providers, escrow officers, home inspectors, mortgage loan originators, processors, underwriters, other necessary office personnel including IT professionals, and back office staff necessary to maintain office operations, are permitted to conduct in-person operations for properties in counties in the Red and Yellow phases, so long as they strictly adhere to the requirements of this guidance. Businesses must employ remote or virtual methods of doing business whenever and wherever possible.

- Consistently monitor employee wellness and do not let anyone symptomatic report to work. Revisit your leave or sick program to allow for this time off.
- Employees who monitor their temperature at home should update their supervisor if they have a temperature exceeding 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit and stay home.
- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from other individuals.
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as frequently as possible.
- Cover coughs or sneezes with a sleeve or elbow, not hands.
- Do not shake hands.
- Regularly clean high-contact surface areas.
- Every person at a work site, business location, or property offered for sale must wear face coverings.

- Implement a mandatory "stay-home" policy for any staff member or agent exhibiting any sign of illness.
- Consider imposing a mandatory or maximum flexibility remote-work policy for employees.
- Utilize separate transportation to property showings and all other in-person activities.
- Schedule in-person office visits, property showings, appraisals, inspections, final walk-throughs, and title insurance activities by appointment and maintain records of all appointments, including contact information for all participants.
- Limit in-person activities to no more than the real estate professional and two people inside a property at any time, exercising appropriate social distancing. Where possible, utilize unoccupied model homes for in-person showings.
- When conducting settlements/closings, utilize remote notary, powers of attorney (POA) or the exchange of contract documents electronically or by mail wherever possible. Where it is not possible to conduct settlement/closing remotely, attendance in person must be limited to required signatories and their legal counsel or real estate professional only. Steps to preserve social distancing must be followed to the maximum extent possible. Advance copies of documents should be provided for review prior to the settlement date.
- Where real estate businesses can conduct operations by telework, particularly office functions, they must do so.
- Provide sellers with relevant up-to-date safety information and protocols for cleaning and sanitizing properties and discuss the benefits and risks of allowing in-person activities.
- Utilize electronic marketing as much as possible, including virtual tours, virtual showings and virtual open houses. Any marketing material, including brochures, flyers, business cards, etc. should be provided virtually or by mail where possible.
- Provide all individuals who will be present for in-person real estate activities with a verbal health screening prior to every in-person activity. Do not allow in-person access to properties where the responses indicate actual or likely exposure.
- Space scheduling of property showings by thirty minutes or more.
- Avoid physical contact within the property by staging in advance to prevent the need for subsequent interaction with items such as lights, interior doors, drapes and blinds. Where physical contact is necessary, ensure that surfaces are sanitized prior to the next showing or return of sellers.
- Minimize the time spent in the property by having discussions, including contract negotiations, with buyers away from the property or model homes via remote means. Model homes (and offices in model homes) may be open, but appointments with clients must be made in advance and all safety orders must be observed, including wearing masks on site.
- Providing food during in-person activities is prohibited.
- Conducting in-person group showings for either potential buyers or real estate professionals, including open houses, broker opens or office tours, is prohibited.
- Failure to strictly adhere to the requirements of this guidance may result in disciplinary actions including suspension of licensure.
- For additional support, The Chester County Health Department can be reached at 610-344-6225.

How Employees Can Protect Themselves

Refer to the Employer Tips and Guidelines section above to review applicable state guidance. The following guidance is sourced from the [NAR coronavirus guidance](#) and [Center for Disease Control recommendations](#).

- Self-monitor your temperature every morning. Employees who have a temperature exceeding 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit should stay home and notify their supervisor.
- Brokers should use their best judgment when formulating a plan.
- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from other individuals.
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as frequently as possible.
- Cover coughs or sneezes with a sleeve or elbow, not hands.
- Do not shake hands.
- Regularly clean high-contact surface areas.
- Use virtual showings and limit in-person activity in all other aspects of the transaction.

If an Employee Tests Positive

- If the individual receives a positive test notification while at work, follow established Human Resources policy. If the individual receives a positive test notification while NOT at work, the individual should follow established Human Resources policy, stay home and self-isolate in accordance with Chester County Health Department guidance.
- Close off areas visited by the positive individual. Refer to the [CDC's general cleaning & disinfecting guidance](#) and [guidance in facilities where someone is sick](#).
- Determine who had contact with the positive individual during the time the individual had symptoms as well as 48 hours prior to symptoms. Notify employees who were in close contact with the confirmed individual while maintaining confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
 - People who had close contact must self-quarantine for 14 days from the date of last contact with the positive individual.
 - "Close contact" is defined as having contact for more than 15 minutes, at a distance of 6 feet or less, with a positive individual.
- Individuals may discontinue home isolation and return to work under the following conditions:
 - At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since your fever went away without the use of fever-reducing medication
 - AND improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath)
 - AND At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- After returning to work, individuals should:
 - Wear a facemask at all times while at work until all symptoms are completely resolved or until 14 days after illness onset, whichever is longer.
 - Be restricted from contact with individuals at a higher risk (e.g., older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk for severe illness).
 - Adhere to hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and cough etiquette (e.g., cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, dispose of tissues in waste receptacles).
 - Self-monitor for symptoms. Seek immediate re-evaluation from occupational health/primary care provider and do not work if symptoms recur or worsen.

- The Chester County Health Department will be notified of all confirmed cases through established disease reporting protocols and will follow-up with the individual appropriately. Contact the Chester County Health Department at 610-344-6225.

Supporting Customers and Clients

- If you are sick, have a temperature above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, if someone in your house is sick, or if you have allergies and can't control sneezing, stay home. Reschedule or contact workers virtually.
- Use virtual services where you can
- Wear a face covering at all times.
- Wash your hands before and after you enter or leave a building if possible. If not, use hand sanitizer when you enter and before you leave the building.
- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from others whenever possible.
- If you get the urge to sneeze or cough, put on your mask, cover your nose, mouth, and mask with a napkin or handkerchief, attempt to delay the urge to sneeze or cough, immediately leave the building, wash your hands and face thoroughly before returning.