



MID-OHIO REGIONAL  
**MORPC**  
PLANNING COMMISSION

# PLANNING TOGETHER: MORPC'S REOPENING & REINVENTION STRATEGY

Last Updated on December 4, 2020



## Introduction

The COVID-19 health crisis has changed how we work to make Central Ohio a better place, but it will not change our core values or our knowledge-driven and service-focused approach. As we plan to reengage in our work and activities, MORPC will cautiously, but assertively protect the health of our team, members, and communities. We are one MORPC team, and we will work through this crisis together no matter how long it takes.

## Goals

As we plan to reopen the office, the MORPC team will:

- Ensure our team and everyone we serve feels heard, supported, connected, and safe.
- Remain true to our reputation as a dependable, objective, and professional resource that delivers value for our member governments, the public, and every corner of Central Ohio.
- Be bold and flexible to seize new opportunities and solve challenges, so we can better serve the region and our members while making MORPC an even better place to work.

## Values

As a MORPC team, we affirm the following core values as a guide to our reopening plans:

1. We engage in our work from a place of respect and empathy. We will practice understanding and awareness of others' feelings, thoughts, and experiences without judgment and treat everyone with respect. We give each other the benefit of the doubt and can be ourselves with each other.
2. We put equity at the center of our work. We will ensure our projects result in fair and equitable outcomes for all, and they are inclusive with our outreach and holistic in our approach. We will strive to identify and eliminate barriers while tackling disparities to encourage the advancement of all people.
3. We fully embrace, promote, and acknowledge diversity and inclusion in the workplace. We will never condone racism or discrimination toward marginalized groups. We encourage a friendly environment for all employees, while valuing different perspectives and ideas.
4. We lead through collaboration as one of our core principles. We are a team, internally as one agency and externally as a diverse region, and we will always work together to ensure everyone's success. We strive to nourish strong and diverse relationships.
5. We highly value data-driven processes. We will operate with the highest degree of integrity and ensure objectivity in our decision-making.
6. We practice safety in our everyday work. We will follow procedures and processes to keep our colleagues, those we serve, and ourselves safe and healthy.

## Reopening Strategy

7. We embrace the importance of optimism and self-care. We will remind each other of the impact of our work and the importance of a positive mindset. We will encourage each other to succeed and to nourish personal health both during and outside of work.
8. We will have room for failure but expect personal accountability. It is okay to make mistakes, they help us learn and grow. Although sometimes difficult, taking ownership leads to better outcomes, understanding, and reduced stress. We will make room to share stories of struggle and success.
9. We believe in public service to improve Central Ohio's communities and environment.

## *MORPC's Reopening and Reinvention Strategy*

MORPC's Reopening and Reinvention Strategy provides a detailed guide for returning to work in an office environment and/or in the field during the evolving Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This comprehensive plan was driven and led by employees, who formed working groups to research best practices and guidance to ensure safe and healthy working conditions.

Information sources included in this document are from the Centers for Disease Control, the Ohio Department of Health, Franklin County Public Health, Columbus Public Health and many others. The continued health and safety of our employees, visitors, and board/committee members led our decision-making process. These recommendations are official guidance of MORPC under the various provisions of the MORPC Employee Guidebook and will remain in effect until the executive director determines a need for revisions or until incorporated fully into the MORPC Employee Guidebook. MORPC will continually monitor federal, state, and local government guidelines for updated information on developing efforts regarding mitigation measures, as well as for additional direction about worker protection.

The Reopening and Reinvention Strategy is a living document. In order to protect and serve our team, members and community partners, we will continue to identify new ways MORPC can improve its programs and services.

## Reopening Safety Operations

MORPC offices will not reopen to regular work or the public until at least January 15, 2021. It is anticipated the reopening will be in stages to accommodate differing health requirements, work functions, and agency needs. Operations will be adjusted to meet the latest public health requirements and recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in office environments.

### *COVID-19 Symptoms*

Individuals with COVID-19 can have a wide variety of symptoms, which range from mild to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus and anyone can have mild to severe symptoms. Older adults and people who have severe underlying medical conditions are at a higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness.

## Symptoms of Coronavirus/COVID 19 (According to the CDC):

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Other less common symptoms, including gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and extremity pain

## Emergency warning signs:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion

The aforementioned list does not include all symptoms. For additional and any updated information, visit the CDC's website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>. Employees exhibiting any of these symptoms are encouraged to seek emergency medical care immediately. Contact 911 for emergency purposes.

Employees residing in Columbus or Worthington areas should seek information from Columbus Public Health for testing sites or call for questions and concerns at (614) 645-1519. Further information is available on their website: [Columbus Public Health](#)

If in Franklin County, please visit the county's health department website: [Franklin County Public Health](#). If outside Franklin County, please contact the Ohio Department of Health, Monday - Sunday 9 a.m. – 8 p.m. at 1-833-4-ASK-ODH or visit their website: [Ohio Department of Health](#).

## Safety Accommodations

All employees must conduct a daily symptom self-assessment. If you answer "yes" to any of the following questions, stay home, consult a physician and notify Human Resources (HR).

1. Are you experiencing a new cough (not related to allergies)?
2. Are you experiencing shortness of breath or difficulty breathing?
3. Are you experiencing a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher?
4. Are you experiencing two or more of the following symptoms?
  - Chills
  - Repeated shaking with chills
  - Muscle pain
  - Headache
  - Sore throat
  - New loss of taste or smell
5. Have you or a household member:
  - Been instructed by a medical professional to isolate for potential coronavirus, with or without being tested?
  - Had prolonged close contact\* with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus?

*\*Close contact is defined by the CDC as being within 6 feet of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of 10 minutes or more or having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (i.e., being coughed on).*

### Reopening Strategy

If an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19, has been in close proximity to someone who has been diagnosed, or becomes ill during work hours, the below actions shall take place.

#### **Scenario 1:** *An Employee or a Member of the Employee's Household Tests Positive for COVID-19 (or is determined to be a probable case)*

**Employee Responsibilities:** Consult a physician. Notify Human Resources. Self-isolate per the physician's orders. Follow protocols for self-assessment and return-to-work criteria.

**Human Resources:** Inform the employee's supervisor and the chief of staff & director of operations. Determine with the employee the first date of symptoms, the employee's last day in the office, the date of testing, and the date test results were received. Discuss employee confidentiality and the process for informing others if the employee had close contact with others. Provide return-to-work criteria to the employee.

Coordinate the following with the supervisor, director of operations, and executive director:

- Work with members, partners, and local agencies to notify individuals who have been identified as having been in close contact with any employee who has tested positive for the virus.
- Delegate employee responsibilities as needed. Maintain employee confidentiality.
- Provide summary updates to the executive director as needed.

#### **Scenario 2:** *An Employee Becomes Ill During Work Hours*

**Employee Responsibilities:** Consult a physician. Notify Human Resources. Expect to self-isolate and follow protocols for self-assessment and return-to-work criteria. If testing confirms a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, employee will not be allowed to return to the office until return-to-work criteria are met.

**Human Resources:** Inform the employee's supervisor and the chief of staff & director of operations. Separate the employee from co-workers. The ill employee will be calmly and discreetly relocated to a designated private area, such as a conference room. Discuss options for leaving the office and travelling home or to a healthcare provider and arrange for travel. Discuss employee confidentiality and the process for informing others if the employee had close contact with others while working during the past 14 days. Provide the employee with appropriate resources and information, including return-to-work criteria.

Coordinate the following with the supervisor, director of operations, and executive director:

- Work with members, partners, and local agencies to notify individuals who have been identified as having been in close contact with any employee who has tested positive for the virus.
- Delegate employee responsibilities as needed. Maintain employee confidentiality
- Provide summary updates to executive director as needed.

## Employee Safety & Expectations

### MORPC Safety Accommodations

MORPC has implemented some additional health and safety precautions to help keep employees and guests safe. MORPC will continue to assess safety needs as the office reopens to employees and the public. All reasonable measures will be taken to ensure that employees with health concerns, physical limitations, or special needs will feel safe while returning to the office.

- All meeting rooms will include signage with occupancy levels and instructions on how to sanitize and clean the room once finished.
- Touchless or other sanitary options for opening and closing doors have been installed where practicable.
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be stationed throughout the building, especially in common areas.
- Disinfecting wipes will be available and stationed throughout the building.
- Additional cleaning by the janitorial service has been implemented.
- Directional and distancing signage have been added.
- Face coverings are mandatory in the office. These will be available to employees and guests as needed.
- The HVAC system will be regularly reviewed, diffusers cleaned, and filters changed for improved air quality.

### Expectations of Employees

Employees play a critical role in the safety of all individuals that enter the MORPC building and interact with our employees. We need to work together to keep everyone safe. Our individual and collective actions are key to the health and safety of all.

- MORPC will remain accommodating for employees as the office is reopened. Employees who have concerns or extraordinary needs about returning to the office must communicate and receive approval by their supervisor and/or HR for necessary accommodations.
- Employees may always contact HR directly for confidentiality regarding health-related or sensitive topics.
- Employees are expected to practice physical distancing when using restrooms and other small spaces, staggering their entrance and exit into small spaces as needed.
- Employees are expected to wash their hands with soap and water frequently (for at least 20 seconds) in warm water to prevent the spread of germs. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Key times for employees to clean their hands are:
  - Before and after work shifts/Before and after work breaks.
  - After blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing.
  - After using the restroom.
  - Before and after eating or preparing food.
  - After putting on, touching, or removing cloth face coverings.
- Individuals should cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or use the inside of their elbow when they cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues into no-touch trash cans and immediately wash hands.
- Hand sanitizer should also be used before and after touching common areas such as printers, copiers, items in the kitchen/break room, and other shared objects.
- To avoid introducing additional droplets into the air, employees are asked to close the toilet lid prior to flushing and to opt for paper towels rather than air dryers.
- Employees will maintain a physical distance (at least 6 feet) from others when possible.
- Employees must practice keeping a safe and sanitary workplace and workspace environment, including routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched objects and surfaces such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and door knobs.

## Reopening Strategy

- Avoid using other employees' devices, such as phones, desks, or other work equipment. Clean and disinfect items before and after use.

## Telecommuting

Teleworking is an arrangement made between employees and employers that allows employees to work remotely as an alternative to the office. Teleworking does not solely mean working from home, but rather working anywhere but the office. The State of Ohio's stay-at-home orders prompted local governments and businesses to implement or expand teleworking policies. Given the prevalence of teleworking and the overall effectiveness of virtual public meetings, MORPC has implemented a flexible teleworking option during the health crisis.

As MORPC navigates the health crisis and staged reopening, we observe the following actions:

- All MORPC meetings are required to have a virtual option to ensure all employees can participate.
- MORPC will provide equipment that employees can take back and forth from work to home including laptops, headsets, and other equipment made available by the Information Technology Services (ITS) team.
- ITS creates security protocols with Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams and other platforms to ensure all employees can safely utilize as many telecommute platforms as possible.
- To ensure a safe and productive work environment, supervisors will be flexible with employees on telecommuting and in-office preferences during the staged reopening.
- Employees should understand that a telework schedule is offered only with the understanding that it is the responsibility of the employee to ensure a proper work environment and productivity is maintained. Personal disruptions such as non-business telephone calls and visitors must be managed by the employee and kept to a minimum. Failure to maintain a proper work environment, as determined by department management, may provide cause to end the teleworking schedule or arrangement.
- Employees should be available, and work conducted during the employee's normal work hours as much as possible. But with coordination with and approval by their supervisor, work may be conducted during non-business hours.
- Telecommuting employees may need to come into the office as required. Consideration of a dedicated day(s) or schedule may be necessary.
- Each employee and supervisor shall work together and reasonably determine telecommuting plans for each employee, being flexible with each other as needs arise.

## *In-Person Meetings & Activities*

- Employees will provide a virtual option for all events for the safety of employees and others.
- MORPC activities will not be in-person except for those work functions which require an in-person element as outlined in this document or as approved by the executive director in consultation with HR and director of operations.
- Employees generally may not participate in in-person work events held by external partners.
  - For example, if an external partner provides a remote option in lieu of an in-person event, employees will be required to use the remote option.
  - If no remote option is available, MORPC will review safety measures and work need to make a determination in consultation with the employee's supervisor, department head, and Operations.

# PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

## Face Coverings

The State of Ohio requires all employees to wear face coverings (primarily cloth masks or face shields) in the workplace to protect themselves and others from the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

- MORPC employees and visitors are required to wear a face covering throughout the workplace.
- Employees using reusable face masks or coverings should wash after each use.
- MORPC will provide a reusable face mask to all employees, however, individuals may wear their own.
- Disposable face masks will be made available in the lobby area for all visitors and guests.
- Mask ties should be secured on the crown of your head and the base of your neck. If a mask has loops, hook them appropriately around your ears and cover your mouth and nose.

## Exceptions

- According to the Ohio Department of Health, employers and employees are NOT required to wear face coverings if it is:
  - Not advised due to health reasons.
  - Against documented industry best practices.
  - Prohibited for a specific position by law or regulation.
  - A violation of a company's safety policy.
- A face covering also is not required if an employee is working alone in an enclosed workspace such as their office, the privacy room or if there is a practical reason one cannot be worn.
- If any of these exceptions apply, written justification must be provided upon request.
- A face shield may be a good alternative to a face mask in some cases and it still meets the primary requirement of wearing a face covering.
- Any exceptions must be reviewed and approved by HR and the director of operations.
- MORPC will accommodate exceptions as needed and work with the employee for adequate alternatives and safety procedures to keep all employees safe.

## Gloves, Gowns and Goggles

- Gloves, gowns, and goggles are not required for use during normal routine office work; however, gloves are highly recommended for use during sanitization of surfaces and high frequency areas. Gloves should be worn to cover the wrist.
- Residential Services employees may have an exception while performing their duties in the field. See the Residential Services section below for more information.
- Cleaning supplies and gloves will be continually purchased, stocked, and made available to employees for use throughout the facility.

## Residential Services

For the past 30 years, MORPC has serviced more than 20,000 Franklin County households through its residential service programs. The services provided help low- and moderate-income homeowners to maintain and improve their homes. The following section outlines the steps Residential Services has taken to continue to maintain the health and safety of employees while providing services to its clients.

### *Policies and Procedures*

To maintain the health and safety of MORPC employees and clients, the following procedural changes have been implemented:

- Shorter inspection times.
- Physical distancing.
- Touchless signatures.
- Inspectors and energy auditors arriving in personal protective equipment that could include face shields, masks, protective eyewear and bodysuits.

For all client interactions, MORPC is requiring its inspectors, and strongly encouraging clients, to wear face masks. Those who do not have a face mask will be provided with one by MORPC. Also, ID badges must be prominently visible and displayed before entering a client's home. If an inspector does not feel comfortable with the household health situation or safety protocol, they may leave the household and contact their supervisor.

### *Health and Safety*

- If working from home, prior to entering a client's property, each MORPC employee will log whether their temperature is at or above 100.4 degrees and send to HR.
- Temperature will be logged along with any symptoms they may have.
- Anyone with a temperature 100.4 degrees or higher will be prohibited from working.
- This information is to be uploaded into each client's case file, and a physical file maintained.
- MORPC has provided all inspectors with a digital thermometer.
- If an employee visits the office first, each inspector will have a designated time to arrive (in 15-minute increments) prior to their inspection time. This will prevent any contact.
- Physical distancing (6 feet) must be practiced while inside the office.
- Inspectors are responsible for checking their temperature prior to arriving in the office and prior to entering a clients' property. Inspectors must follow procedural guidelines.

### *PPE*

- Employees must put on the necessary PPE prior to in-person contact with any household member, including:
  - Protective suit.
  - Mask.
  - Shoe coverings.
  - Goggles.
  - Gloves.
- Inspectors will be required to have their MORPC identification visible for clients to see.
- MORPC will provide clients a copy of the inspector's ID via email or text a picture at time of scheduling.
- Inspectors will be required to wear N95 or K-N95 masks, which MORPC will make available as needed.

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- Masks will always be used in combination with goggles and/or a face shield.

## Cleaning Supplies

- Disinfect all equipment appropriately using disinfecting wipes, spray, and/or hand sanitizer.
- Any disinfectant or cleaning materials will first be checked per EPA guidelines to ensure they are approved for use to eradicate COVID-19.
- Equipment must be cleaned before entering a home or after each inspection.
- The client shall sign a waiver stating that MORPC is taking all practical precautions to avoid the spread of COVID-19 and is not liable for any transfer.

## Inspection and Client Education

- When performing client education or obtaining necessary signatures, use the following procedures:
  - Tablets will not be taken into the house.
  - Anything requiring signatures will be printed off prior to the inspection.
  - The client must sign a paper copy.
  - The inspector will pre-sign the copy before the inspection.
  - After the client signs the document, the inspector will take a clear picture of the document for our files.
  - The above procedure(s) will eliminate any secondary contact with the customer(s).
- When the inspection is complete, the inspector will follow the following procedures:
  - Disinfect all equipment using the procedures mentioned above.
  - Place smaller equipment in a large container.
  - Remove mask and protective suit and place in a separate plastic tube or sealed plastic bag.
  - If a single-use mask is worn, the mask must be discarded after each use.
  - If N-95 masks are available, they can be used for 8 hours per CDC guidelines.
  - A sharpie marker will be used to write on the mask the amount of time it was worn.
  - At 8 hours, the mask will be discarded in a sealed bag.
  - The Tyvek suit will remain in a sealed container for at least 48 hours so any virus will be killed.
  - The suit is not to be re-used until the 48 hours has expired.
  - MORPC will use CDC guidelines for re-usage of all N-95 and KN-95 masks and protective suits.
  - Remove shoe coverings and gloves and place in a sealed container (a baggie will work for this application), and discard.
  - After sanitizing and removing all coverings, thoroughly sanitize hands.

# Employee Acknowledgement and Receipt of MORPC Reopening Strategy

I acknowledge receipt of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's Reopening Strategy that was updated on December 4, 2020.

I have read the document in its entirety, and I understand the required policies and procedures. I recognize that I am able to ask questions about this reopening strategy at any time. I agree to abide by the policies and procedures outlined for the health and safety of myself and others.

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Employee Printed Name

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Employee Signature

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Date

Employees will be notified of updates to policies and procedures as they occur.

