



### **Jewish Response & Action Network (JРАН)**

JРАН is a collaborative effort between the Federation and partner agencies that works together to build and sustain an emergency response network. This includes financial support, volunteer management, resource sharing, trainings, self-care, and timely information on credible threats to our community.

Since its inception at the end of 2019, a majority of the work of JРАН has focused on sharing resources and best practices related to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

JРАН participating organizations are joined by a shared set of Jewish values in facing these unprecedented times. Those values include:

- *Pikuah Nefesh* – the safeguarding of life as a bedrock of Jewish law
- *She'at Hadehak* – the need to be flexible and make adjustments in times of crisis and uncertainty
- *Hesed* – the practice of love and kindness as we make decisions.

### **Recommended Work Safe Guidelines for Houston Jewish Institutions**

As we begin to prepare our Jewish institutions for re-opening, there are several considerations we recommend be taken in order to encourage a safe and healthy environment of employees, congregants, students, families and guests based on current guidance.

This guide outlines steps that each institution should consider and factor into their planning before opening doors to staff and visitors. Each institution is encouraged to develop their own policies per federal, state, and local laws and regulatory guidance. These guidelines are not intended to be comprehensive because there is much we still do not know about COVID-19 and the situation is dynamic and evolving. We will do our best to update this document as additional official recommendations are released.

We hope you use this document as a conversation starter as you develop the policies and procedures that fit your organization and building space.

## Communication and Planning: The Key to Transitioning Back to Work

- Develop Policies and Procedures in Advance
  - Things to think about: mask requirements, ability to maintain proper hygiene, visitor policies, sick leave, flexible policies around childcare (school/day care closures), disinfecting workspaces and common high-touch points, and ability to maintain safe distance between employees.
  - Things to consider:
    - A phased or rotation approach for returning to work to help with social distancing
    - A PPE policy for all staff
    - Create a policy around number of people allowed to safely congregate based on building size, layout, and ability to maintain 6 feet between persons
    - Establish new occupancy limits for meeting rooms based on ability to maintain social distance
    - Encourage virtual meetings
    - Place a timeline on new policies, when to review and when do they expire
  - Communication: present new policies to senior staff, make sure all are on the same page, allow plenty of time for questions
    - Stress manager flexibility as specific issues may apply to employees differently
  - Communication: present new policies to staff before returning to work, considering messaging and unified responses to employee questions
    - Explain new normal when returning to the office
      - Will masks be required?
      - Will the organization provide masks, or will employees be expected to bring their own?
      - Explain sanitization protocols, who is expected to do what and where?
    - Create a plan for self-care and employee stress management
      - This is an uncertain time for all of us, but each employee will react differently. Allow time for employees to practice self-care
      - Create flexibility or space for employees to safely destress

## **Preventing an Outbreak: Creating a Safe Environment**

- Consider a contact tracing policy/protocol in case of a sick employee/visitor
  - If there is a sick employee/visitor with COVID-19
    - Do not disclose employee details; keep specifics confidential
    - Shut down office/building, quarantine employee, disinfect all spaces before reopening
    - Have all employees/staff/visitors with potential contact self-isolate until tested and results are back
    - Close building for at least 24 hours, hire company to sanitize
  - Determine how this information will be communicated within your organization and with members/donors/participants
  - Consider establishing an anonymous reporting system
    - Create anonymous complaint channel for employees and visitors to report unsafe practices or violations

## **Human Resources and Legal Considerations: Maintaining Compliance**

- Families First Coronavirus Response Act (effective through 12/31/2020)
  - Provides emergency leave for parents to take care of children when schools are closed
  - Paid sick leave
    - 2 weeks/80 hours at regular rate of pay for quarantine or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms
    - 2 weeks/80 hours at 2/3 pay for employees who cannot find care for child or family member quarantined
  - Additional paid leave – employees who have been employed for 30 days or more
    - Additional 10 weeks of paid leave at 2/3 regular rate of pay to care for child whose childcare provider is closed due to COVID-19
- School Closures and Childcare
  - Create flexible schedules to allow working parents of school aged children ability to care for children
  - Allow for virtual working environments until childcare facilities are opened
- Flexibility and Staff Safety
  - Think about how to handle operations if people would like to continue working from home
  - How to treat all employees fairly when some come in and some work from home
  - Alternate days teams: Consider staggering days so only partial staff are in at any one time

## **Travel Policies: Precautionary Measures**

- Consider policies that help contain new spread of COVID-19
  - Discontinue work related travel
  - Require reporting of all personal travel outside Greater Houston
  - Quarantine workers at home when returning from high risk areas, regardless if travel was personal or work related

## **Employee Health: Measures to Ensure a Healthy Working Environment**

- Consider temperature taking and health screening
  - Keep data confidential (HIPPA compliance should be kept in mind)
    - Collect as little data as possible, do not keep a log of temps, just document that you are taking them
    - Use an instant read, no touch thermometer
  - Keep people socially distant while waiting for their turn
  - Keep the person taking the temp safe
    - Consider not training staff to take temps
    - May want to contract with a medical company to do it—they already have training and proper equipment
  - May need to compensate employees while in line
    - Do it after clock-in
    - Don't make people come early, unless they get paid
  - Screen for symptoms every day, post signs about symptoms at entrances as a reminder
- Masks/PPE
  - Develop mask policy
    - Post signage at entrances about mask policy
    - If supplying masks, need proper procedure in place as well
      - Must maintain a sufficient supply
      - Must keep them clean or use disposable
      - Must train employees on how to properly wear them
        - need to cover nose and mouth
    - Address what types of masks/face coverings are allowed
      - Disposable masks
      - Homemade face coverings allowed? (bandanas, cloth masks, etc)
- Maintaining a Safe Work Environment - Social Distancing and Sanitization
  - Create Policy or General Practices for Social Distancing and Sanitization
    - Post signs at all hand washing stations about proper washing

- Increase custodial cleaning for all high touch and high traffic areas
  - Increase HVAC outside air circulation
  - Working spaces should be at least 6 feet apart
    - Utilize markings to indicate 6 feet/proper spacing
    - If not possible,
  - Provide hand sanitizer for people to use
- Think About Meeting Rooms
  - To be closed for in-person meetings, including staff meetings
  - Can your group follow the new occupation limit policies
  - Is it safer to continue virtual meetings, including for internal staff meetings
- Breakrooms – Things to Consider
  - Remove tables and chairs to discourage congregating
  - Do not allow use of communal fridges or freezers (staff to bring own cooler)
  - Wipe down microwaves/other frequent touch points
  - Shut off water fountains, use single use cups
  - Consider closing breakrooms all together
    - Bring important signage to hallways (OSHA, FMLA, etc)
- Bathrooms
  - Turn communal bathrooms into single use
  - Lysol after each use
- Hallways
  - Turn into one-way corridors so people aren't passing each other
  - Need to preemptively stop face-to-face interactions
- Entrances
  - Stagger entrances so employees don't all use the same one
  - Consider having one designated exit and one entrance to promote one-way flow of traffic
- Sanctuary and Social Halls
  - Sit every 2 chairs or place chairs every 6 feet, stagger every other row
  - Utilize markings/tape off closed areas
  - Consider giving each household 4 pieces of paper to block off chairs once they sit down (recycle after each use, do not reuse paper once they have been handed out)
  - Members of same household can sit together
    - Must live together, not just be members of the same family/related

- Visitors
  - Come up with company policy on visitors
    - Address package delivery
    - Include unannounced visitors
    - Visitor log should be utilized for contact tracing (name, phone number, and who they are visiting, and purpose of visit)
  - Post signs with visitor policy
    - Notice that if you have COVID-19 symptoms recently or been in contact with someone who has, not to enter
    - Call receptionist before entering building

### **Building Maintenance Considerations: Things to Do Before Returning**

- Flush the stagnant water in the pipes in all sinks so that it runs clear and does not smell like chlorine
- Dump all ice from the ice machines and run several cycles to flush the system
- Clean all refrigerators for food that was not disposed of before lockdown
- Maintain all equipment, including printers, computers and other mechanical items
- Service HVAC system as needed, ensure proper building maintenance is up to date

### **Additional Considerations**

- Schools, Camps, and Childcare Facilities
  - Review records, ensure all children are up to date on vaccines and well-checks per school policy
  - Ensure compliance with government regulatory departments
  - Communications: will be important to communicate openly and frequently with parents so they feel their children are in a safe environment
- Choirs
  - COVID-19 may be spread through speaking and it is thought that singing spreads the droplets further
  - Consider delaying in-person choir gatherings until there is a vaccine
  - Host choir practice virtually
- Prayer Books and Communal Religious Items
  - Keep in mind items that are typically touched by different congregants
  - Consider policies about touching items (kissing the Torah, drinking kiddush, using prayer books, etc.)
  - May want to print/copy the prayers for the day and dispose of after each use
  - Consider designating one person to kiss the Torah or drink kiddush on behalf of everyone or using symbolic gestures

The Jewish Federation of Greater Houston is here as a resource should you have additional questions or need more specific guidance. The Jran network provides a place where we can discuss and share facts, thoughts, and concerns that affect our Jewish community. Should you need anything else, please reach out to Jackie Fisherman, Director of Government Affairs, at [ifisherman@houstonjewish.org](mailto:ifisherman@houstonjewish.org).

We are all in this together.

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This report was prepared with the guidelines issued by:

White House and Centers for Disease Control, Guidelines for Opening Up American Again, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/#guidelines>.

U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employer Paid Leave Requirements, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-employer-paid-leave>.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>.

United States Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19, <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>.

Greater Houston Partnership, Reopen Houston Safely, [https://www.houston.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Reopen%20Houston%20Safely\\_5-5-20.pdf?\\_zs=FWKvN1&\\_zl=6j4l5](https://www.houston.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Reopen%20Houston%20Safely_5-5-20.pdf?_zs=FWKvN1&_zl=6j4l5)