

**Guidelines for Employees to Minimize COVID-19 Exposure**  
**Last Updated: August 27, 2020 (newest information in Red)**

**Scope**

This document pertains to all Avista employees when working in the office, remotely, or in the field. Some portions of this document will be more relevant to specific work groups depending on their work activity. These guidelines may be modified from time to time to reflect changes in evolving response to the Pandemic.

**Objective**

These guidelines are designed to enable employees to proceed with work in a manner that minimizes the exposure and potential transfer of the COVID-19 virus to employees, customers, and contractors.

**Legal Framework**

As additional work resumes in Avista's service territory, there have been a variety of overlapping and often confusing work requirements released from various agencies. To the extent possible, these guidelines are in accordance with the most current requirements and recommendations from Governors' orders, state labor and industries guidance, federal and state OSHA recommendations, CDC guidance, and guidance from state departments of health. To the extent differences in requirements exist across different states, these state-specific requirements have been clearly highlighted.

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**EMPLOYEES MUST FOLLOW THESE PRECAUTIONS FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY AS WELL AS THE SAFETY OF OTHER EMPLOYEES, CONTRACTORS AND OUR CUSTOMERS**

**1. Avoid Close Proximity with Customers, Members of the Public, Contractors, and Other Employees**

Employees must take all measures to avoid Close Proximity (defined below) with customers, members of the public, contractors and other employees to minimize exposure to and the spread of the COVID-19 virus through person-to-person contact.

**Close Proximity** means:

- Being within 6 feet of a person for 10 minutes or more and/or
- Being in direct contact with secretions from a person (such as being coughed or sneezed on, or sharing utensils).

According to the CDC, the virus is thought to spread mainly from person to person and particularly between people who are in Close Proximity with one another. As currently understood, the primary method of transmission is through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes and the droplets land in the mouth, eyes or nose of people who are nearby, or possibly if the droplets are inhaled into the lungs. To visit the CDC site for more information, click [here](#).

**Note:** Job modifications may be necessary to avoid Close Proximity, including deferring portions of the work to a later time or reorganizing the work to break up tasks in a manner that avoids Close Proximity.

## 2. Guidelines When Interaction Occurs

If it is necessary to interact in person with an individual, precautions should be taken, including the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as detailed in the next section.

- Employees must cover their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing and should never direct a cough or sneeze into the air above someone within 6 feet.
- Employees should utilize social distancing signs when appropriate and place them at job sites when work is being performed in public areas to reduce Close Proximity with members of the public.
- When interaction with customers or the public is necessary, it is preferred to call the customer by phone rather than knocking on the door and talking face-to-face. If it is necessary to knock on the door, the employee should knock and then back away from the door to maintain social distancing throughout the interaction.
- Employees who work in crews should limit Close Proximity with other crew members to minimize exposure. Crews should avoid rotating as much as possible to limit interactions.
- Employees should stagger lunch and other breaks to avoid Close Proximity and pay particular attention to social distancing at the beginning and end of shifts.
- Employees should minimize interactions when picking up or delivering equipment, materials, or supplies.
- Employees who choose to respond to medical emergencies involving other employees, contractors or members of the public should review the [CDC guidelines for emergency responders](#) or consult with Occupational Health.
- Employees should keep a record of name, contact information and date/time of visits when interacting in Close Proximity with a customer, contractor or member of the public for contact tracing if needed.
- Employees should utilize methods of ventilation that will provide a clean air supply to their breathing zone.

## 3. Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

There are many recommendations for the use of PPE to avoid contracting or spreading the virus. It should be noted, however that PPE supply may be limited, and employees are asked to follow the guidelines for their specific work groups in determining what PPE should be used and when.

Common types of PPE include safety glasses, nitrile gloves, disposable surgical masks, cloth masks, and N95 respirators. The following are specific guidelines related to PPE:

- Respirators are not normally recommended for social distancing purposes but may be appropriate where workers must have Close Proximity to others. (Note: the use of N95 respirators is voluntary; however, employees should contact the Safety Department to obtain the manufacturer's guidance and training instructions).
- When disposable gloves are used, employees should put the gloves on before interacting with a customer or member of the public and remove them once the interaction is complete and before getting into the employee's vehicle.
- Employees should not try to reuse gloves once they are removed.
- To reduce the possibility of touching one's eyes, employees should wear safety glasses (or other glasses) even when not required.
- Employees should ask their supervisor or the Safety Department about the availability of specific PPE and the recommendation or requirements of its use, including how to properly don and dispose of PPE.
- Employees should not share PPE items that are not designated for sharing. An example of a PPE item that may be designated for sharing is an arc flash suit. Items such as gloves and safety glasses should not be shared. Employees must thoroughly clean the shared items before and after use.
- Employees should develop a central point to drop off or pick up items that transfer between employees and implement a one-at-a-time process.

**Note:** OSHA has provided recommendations for changes to an employer's existing workplace controls in response to COVID-19 pandemic, and PPE is considered the **last line** of defense after Engineering Controls, Administrative Controls, and Safe Work Practices.

#### 4. Use of Face Coverings

##### **Work Being Performed in Washington:**

Under Washington's *Safe Start – Stay Healthy Proclamation* issued on May 31, 2020, employers are mandated to require workers always wear some type of face covering. The Proclamation is effective on June 8, 2020. (See Page 5 of the Proclamation [here](#)) The only exceptions are:

- employees working alone in an office, vehicle, or at a job site
- when the job has no in-person interaction
- employees who have a medical condition or disability that makes wearing a facial covering inappropriate
- by any employee who is deaf or hard of hearing – or who is communicating with someone – who relies on language cues such as facial markers and expression and mouth movements as a part of communication

Employees should contact their immediate manager to obtain a face covering if they do not already have one. Employees should contact the Safety Department for specific questions if they are wearing a N95 or SCBA. Employees should contact Occupational Health if they have a medical condition or disability that makes wearing a face covering difficult or inappropriate.

**The guidance below is meant to cover most situations and the corresponding face covering requirement. This applies to any situation where an employee is working with another employee, customer or member of the public. These requirements are in addition to current PPE requirements.**

<b>Work Group</b>	<b>General Face Covering Requirement</b>
Any Employee in Structure or Office	Requirement is a face covering unless 6-foot distance can be maintained at all times from another employee, customer or a member of the public AND has a barrier such as an office or a cubicle with at least 6-foot high walls on 3 sides.
Any Employees in Vehicle	If more than one occupant in a vehicle, employees are required to wear a disposable surgical mask.
Electric (Line crews, Meter Shop, Downtown Network)	Requirement on job site is cloth FR mask.
Gas	Requirement on job site is cloth FR mask.
GPSS	Requirement on job site is cloth FR mask.
Communication Techs	Requirement on job site is cloth FR mask.
Facilities	Requirement is cloth mask.
Warehouse	Requirement is cloth mask.
Fleet	Requirement is cloth mask.
Any Work with Employees within 3 feet of each other	Requirement is a filtered respirator such as a N95, PAPR, Cartridge Respirator or SCBA. The respirator rules, such as fit testing, may apply. Please contact the Safety Department before the work starts. Exceptions to this may apply when FR clothing is required by Avista or state law.

FAQ's regarding the Face Covering requirements can be found [here](#).

**Note:** the requirement to wear face coverings when working in Washington does not eliminate any other requirement in these Work Guidelines.

##### **Work Being Performed in Other States**

The following requirements apply to all employees working in states other than Washington:

- Employees must wear face coverings at all times when they are **inside** at an Avista property.
- Employees must wear face coverings when they cannot maintain 6 ft distance from another person when **outdoors**.
- The only exceptions to the face covering requirements are for:
  - employees working alone in an office, vehicle, or at a job site
  - when the job has no in-person interaction
  - employees who have a medical condition or disability that makes wearing a facial covering inappropriate; or
  - by any employee who is deaf or hard of hearing – or who is communicating with someone – who relies on language cues such as facial markers and expression and mouth movements as a part of communication
- Social distancing must still be maintained regardless of whether a face covering is being used or not.
- When more than one employee is traveling in a vehicle, all employees in the vehicle are required to wear a disposable surgical mask.
- Employees who have recovered from COVID-19 and/or have COVID-19 antibodies are also required to wear a face covering. Some individuals who are infected may never develop antibodies. For more information see [CDC](#) guidance on continued use face coverings.

Avista has purchased both fire resistant (“FR”) and non-FR cloth masks for employees working in the field. Specific instructions for the use of masks are available from the Safety Department.

**Note:** Cloth face masks are not particulate respirators and should not be worn in environments with constituents of concern (e.g. asbestos, lead, or hexavalent chromium, or in proximity to persons with COVID-19). For additional information on face covering types and usage, click [here](#).

### **When Interacting with Customers**

Employees must wear a face covering when engaging with a customer or members of the public to support a safe and respectful customer engagement. However, employees should still take all precautions to maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet when engaging with a customer or member of the public even when wearing a face covering.

### **5. Use of Proactive/Alternative Communication**

To promote segregation and social distancing where feasible, communication should be made with onsite personnel prior to arrival at work sites. The communication should include details such as work plans, crew members, and anticipated arrival and departure times in order to allow employees to plan the best way to avoid Close Proximity with others. Communication methods such as Skype, mobile phone, and radio should be used as much as possible to reduce face-to-face interactions, particularly when employees are communicating with critical operations staff.

### **6. Extra Precautions When Group Work is Required**

When group work is required, employees should utilize methods to avoid exposure as much as possible. Some options are to create smaller teams/crews, divide work tasks, or use barrier tape to create six-foot distances. Social distancing should always be practiced, especially during meals and breaks when interaction is common. In places such as break rooms or locker rooms it is especially important to utilize social distancing, staggered schedules to avoid physical interaction, and separation of workspaces and equipment. Meetings should be limited to fewer than 10 employees at a time and those employees must maintain a 6-foot spacing of all in attendance.

## **7. Limit Exposure in Vehicles**

When enough vehicles are available, it is recommended for employees to have one occupant per vehicle to avoid unnecessary Close Proximity. If necessary to allow for one occupant per vehicle, personal vehicles may be used. If more than one employee must be in a vehicle, the same employees should continue to ride together to avoid Close Proximity with other crew members. When more than one employee is in a vehicle, both employees must wear a disposable surgical mask. In addition, all employees should thoroughly clean all “high touch” vehicle surfaces when receiving and returning fleet vehicles. Employees should wear gloves and utilize disinfectant wipes or an approved cleaning agent and allow the surface to dry before touching.

## **8. Avoid Unnecessary Physical Interaction**

Although this document provides guidance on mitigating risk when employees must interact with others, it is important to note that voluntary group, or social gatherings are not recommended even if social distancing is practiced. It is natural and normal for employees to want to connect during this time, however, this creates unnecessary risk. Employees should utilize video conferencing during this time for social or group activities.

## **9. Precautions When Out of Town Work is Required**

When employees are required to work out of town, employees should take basic precautions. Employees should limit visits to public spaces such as coffee shops and restaurants, and instead utilize take out or delivery for meals when possible. When staying in a hotel, employees should wipe down commonly used surfaces and have the rooms cleaned daily. Finally, if the out of town work spans over several weeks, employees should consider obtaining supervisor approval to reserve the room for the duration of the project to reduce turnover and potential exposure.

## **10. Pay Extra Attention to Safety Precautions**

As always, safety is of utmost importance and employees should continue to conduct safety meetings, tailboards, three-part communication and all other safety precautions normally taken. It is important to think through safety precautions that may be routine and consider if the current modified working conditions have any impact and find alternatives that continue to provide safe work practices (e.g. safety meetings may not be in person because of social distancing). It is expected that certain tasks will now take longer to perform due to the social distancing requirements and the need to develop new procedures.

## **11. Continue to Report Injuries to the Safety Department**

Although the working conditions may be different, employees must continue to report all injuries, regardless of severity or the nature in which they were caused, through the Employee Incident Report here. This includes those injuries that occur in the home based on our current work environment. The Safety Department will review all at-home injuries to determine any mitigation steps to avoid further injury and to comply with the required recordkeeping practices outlined by regulatory agencies. If an employee requires medical treatment due to an injury while working at home, please contact Occupational Health immediately for required forms and guidance.

**Note:** Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) provides guidance that states: *Injuries and illnesses that occur while an employee is working at home, including work in a home office, will be considered work-related if the injury or illness occurs while the employee is performing work for pay or compensation in the home, and the injury or illness is directly related to the performance of work rather than to the general home environment or setting.*

## **12. Use of Sanitization Methods to Prevent Spread of the Virus**

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, it is more important than ever to be vigilant in keeping employees and equipment clean. The following procedures must be followed:

- Employees must sanitize and wipe down “high touch” areas before and after use.
- Employees must wash their hands upon entering any Avista facility or work site, before and after meals, after working outside, after using shared equipment, when returning from the restroom, after coughing,

sneezing or blowing their nose, and prior to leaving work. All employees should wash their hands frequently throughout the day.

- When washing their hands, employees should use soap and water and wash for at least 20 seconds.
- Washing hands is the preferred method to protect against the virus, but when not possible, hand sanitizer with a minimum of 60% alcohol is an acceptable replacement. Employees should avoid touching areas around their eyes, mouth, and nose, and should cough or sneeze into their sleeve whenever possible.
- Employees are strongly encouraged to use gloves when engaging in work that involves touching hard surfaces or “high touch” areas (e.g. handles, doorknobs, etc.).
- Vehicles must be cleaned regularly.
- Employees should avoid sharing equipment such as pens, clipboards, desks, phones, and other frequently used items. Equipment, materials, and tools that must be shared, such as computers and common technology, should be cleaned regularly to minimize exposure or spread of the virus. A chlorine-based disinfectant wipe or spray (stocked in the Warehouse) may be used to decontaminate work surfaces and tools. The spray is best suited for large open areas or outdoors to minimize air concentration. If in doubt about how to properly clean an item or workspace, employees should contact their supervisor or Occupational Health.
- Hands should be washed, or hand sanitizer used after touching shared surfaces such as doors, coffee pots, and toilets.
- Employees who engage in work that involves a high volume of equipment handling should take additional precautions including the use of gloves.
- Jobsite toilets must be cleaned and disinfected regularly, including any frequently touched items such as door pulls and toilet seats. Avista has provided some options to help with the issue of reduced availability of restroom facilities for remote and field workers.

**Note:** Hand sanitizing solutions containing 60% alcohol are flammable mixtures and should be handled as such and kept away from an open flame. In addition, not all sanitizing solutions are effective against COVID-19, and employees should check with the Safety Department prior to using a new product that is not currently stocked.

### **13. Pay Extra Attention to Health**

Employees should take extra care to monitor their health during this time. Any employee who is ill must stay home (or, if at work, return home immediately), monitor symptoms and return to work only when appropriate under the following guidelines:

- All employees should contact their health care provider if they are demonstrating any of the following symptoms: cough or shortness of breath and/or any two of the following symptoms: fever above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (F) (taken orally) or 99.4 F (forehead surface); chills, repeated shaking with chills; muscle pain; headache; sore throat or new loss of taste or smell. Employees demonstrating these symptoms should also notify their supervisor immediately and stay away from work.
- Employees should notify their supervisor and follow instructions from their supervisor, Human Resources Manager, and Occupational Health in the event an employee or a person living in the employee’s household has been either: (a) diagnosed with COVID-19 by a medical provider; (b) tested for COVID-19 and awaiting results; or (c) tested positive for COVID-19.
- Any supervisor who is informed that an employee is suspected of having or confirmed as having COVID-19 immediately must notify Human Resources. This includes learning that an employee has been tested for COVID-19. Employees should contact Occupational Health prior to testing if possible to identify Rapid Testing locations.

#### **14. Daily Health Screening and Close Proximity Documentation**

Employees shall perform an evaluation of their health and well-being (“Daily Health Screening”) prior to reporting to work (IBEW Local 77 and 659 members see Amendment to COVID-19 Letter of Agreement dated 08.19.2020). The only exception is if the employee is not required at any point in the day to leave their residence (whether permanent or temporary) for work. Employees must document that the health screening was performed. Each manager shall work with their employees to determine the best process for reporting the information, including frequency and method of delivery. It is recommended that employees who have technology available report via e-mail on a daily basis. Employees who do not have technology available shall capture the information on Form N-2768 and deliver it to their manager on a daily or weekly basis.

If an employee reports to work (non-scheduled time) after concluding their normal workday, documentation of an additional health screening is not required. If an employee reports to work on a normal day off (such as a Saturday), a Daily Health Screening shall be performed and documented prior to arrival. Employees shall continue to monitor their health for symptoms that may have developed since performing the health screening earlier in the day.

Additionally, employees are required to document the name of any Close Proximity Contact with another employee, contractor, or customer during the course of a day. This information shall be documented daily and submitted at the end of the shift or as agreed upon by the manager and employee. This list is intended to assist in the accurate contact tracing of anyone who was exposed to, tests positive for, or has symptoms of COVID-19. If the individual is a customer, please follow the guidelines related to Close Proximity Customer Contact found [here](#).

Form N-2768 can be ordered through Avista’s Graphics Department to utilize for both the Daily Health Screening and Close Proximity Contact List documentation. The Daily Health Screening instructions (including symptoms to look for) can be [found here](#).

#### **15. Expectations Regarding Third-Party Worksites**

Avista employees who are working on third-party worksites may be expected to comply with expectations set forth by the worksite superintendent, general contractor, COVID-19 supervisor, or similar third-party supervisor that are based on current state or local requirements related to COVID-19. If requested, Avista employees shall comply with reasonable requests from third-party worksite supervisors that may include the following:

- Providing written certification that the employee conduct the Daily Health Screening [found here](#), or participating in an onsite self-health assessment that includes a confidential temperature check and answering a checklist about any current symptoms and contact with persons diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Signing a worksite attendance sheet. \*
- Wearing PPE, including face coverings when required, and eye protection, and gloves at all times.
- Maintaining a six-foot separation from other persons whenever possible.
- Participating in any training required at the worksite.
- Complying with any other reasonable requirement.

Avista employees are encouraged to connect with the COVID-19 Supervisor when arriving at the worksite to confirm all specific requirements. Employees should also plan to bring their own PPE to worksites.

Regardless of additional requirements at a third-party worksite, Avista employees must always follow the Avista Guidelines and should not comply with any request that would cause them to not follow any measure set forth in Avista’s Work Guidelines. If an Avista employee has any concerns with complying with

a third-party request or process, then the employee should immediately contact an Avista supervisor for guidance prior to commencing or continuing any work. If any Avista supervisor has questions about Avista's obligation to comply with such requests, then please contact Safety Manager, Tony Klutz. Phone (509) 495-2648; Cell (509) 703-3065.

\* When signing a worksite attendance sheet, the crew foreman or lead should provide their name and provide their work phone number, acknowledging that the Avista crew has their own sign-in sheet. This will ensure that Avista can perform contact tracing, if needed, rather than the third-party contacting Avista employees. If the crew foreman or lead is requested to provide contact tracing information from a worksite they visited, he or she should contact their manager and HRM to help them through the process.

**Note:** The preferred method of providing a health screening to a third party is supplying the certification of Daily Health Screening described above. If a third-party worksite supervisor will not accept this form, employees may be asked to participate in an onsite health screening. However, Avista employees are NOT required to submit to onsite health screenings by a third party if they don't feel comfortable doing so and should notify their supervisor immediately in this case.

## **16. Training Program Requirements**

In early May, Governor Inslee issued guidance for restarting essential workforce development programs under the Safe Start Phase 2 recovery plan. Avista should continue remote or virtual training as much as possible. However, to the extent in person training is necessary, all Avista training programs must meet the requirements below.

- The primary coordinator of the training must provide notice to the Director/VP of that business unit and to the EOP Core Team of the training to be conducted in person
- The primary coordinator of the training must use this [Workforce Training Restart Checklist - 6.5.2020](#) and keep documentation of compliance in case of audit or other investigation.

## **17. Exception Process**

It is recognized that there may be a need to conduct business outside of the parameters of the work guidelines. Requests for exceptions to these Work Guidelines, including requests for onsite work or in person meetings must meet the following criteria:

- Must comply with the most current local or state directives for the service territory
- Must be approved in advance by the Director and Vice President of the relevant business unit(s).

The person requesting the exception should notify the EOP Core Team in addition to the Director/VP.

## **18. Protocols and Guidelines for Employees who have Recovered from COVID-19**

Employees who test positive or negative for COVID-19 on a viral or an antibody test, must still follow the safety guidelines and protocols in the Work Guidelines to protect themselves and others. It is not yet known if people who recover from COVID-19 are immune from getting infected again.

## **19. Additional Guidance Documents**

The above guidance is supplemented by additional information on the Safety Department SharePoint site [here](#).