

# WCS PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

## DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Revised 6/1/21

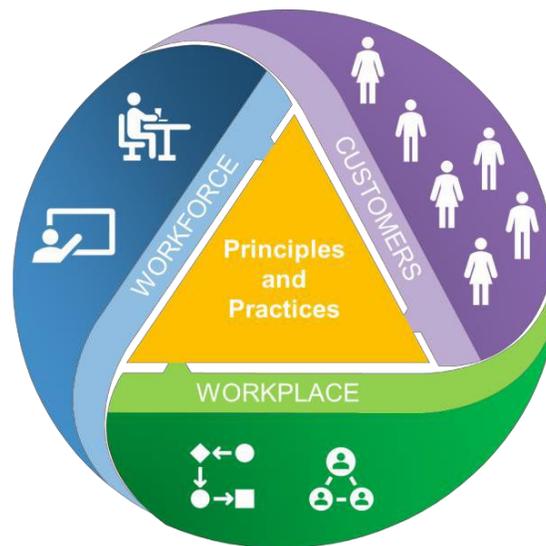
To help navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic and protect the health and well-being of employees and those we serve, Wisconsin Community Services (WCS) has established health guidelines, primarily utilizing information from the state of [Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#), [local public health officials](#), the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), and the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#)

The following **PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES** were developed in accordance with these health authorities and rapid changes over the last 30 days. WCS is revising its principles and practices in accordance with state and local health guidelines, recent developments, the expectations of funding sources, and a desire to keep staff, those served, and visitors safe.

### Prepare and Protect WORKFORCE

- ✓ Protective Practices
- ✓ Screening
- ✓ Rapid Response to Cases
- ✓ Flexible Work Options
- ✓ Risk Mitigation
- ✓ Education and Cultural Practices

Sources:  
Medical College of Wisconsin,  
CDC, WHO, OSHA



### Prepare and Protect CUSTOMERS

- ✓ Risk Awareness
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Communication

### Prepare and Protect WORKPLACE

- ✓ Disinfecting Practices
- ✓ Environmental Controls
- ✓ Workspace Design
- ✓ Workflow Design
- ✓ Controlled Access

## **NEW:** PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VACCINATED PERSONS

COVID-19 vaccines continue to demonstrate high efficacy at preventing severe and symptomatic infections and reducing the transmission of the disease to others. Recent reporting from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) indicates that COVID-19 infection and death rates are dropping dramatically as nearly 50 percent of Americans have now received at least one vaccine shot. Accordingly, the CDC has issued new mask guidelines for fully vaccinated people that ease restrictions. States and local communities are also loosening COVID-19 restrictions in response to increases in vaccinations and the decline of new infections, hospitalizations, and deaths.

**Fully vaccinated and non-vaccinated persons should continue to follow CDC GUIDELINES and adhere to the Principles and Practices in this document.**

# WORKFORCE

## Protective Practices

### IN-OFFICE WORK-RELATED RULES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Employees are expected to:

- ⇒ **Practice social distancing**  
*(at least six feet between individuals)*
- ⇒ **Practice CDC recommended hygiene**  
*(Wash hands with soap & water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer containing at least 70% alcohol; avoid touching of face; avoid shaking hands; sneeze or cough into a tissue or the inside of elbow)*
- ⇒ **Avoid non-essential meetings and gatherings**
- ⇒ **Avoid common area dining**
- ⇒ **Wear face coverings (see box below)**

To support in-office/building/work area work-related rules, **WCS administrators and supervisors** will:

- ⇒ **Issue face coverings/masks** for employees and visitors  
*(Some staff will also receive gowns, goggles, or face shields depending on the type of work they are engaged in.)*
- ⇒ **Enforce the practice of social distancing at all times**, including hallways and common areas
- ⇒ **Provide hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray, and wipes** for disinfecting and cleaning

**UPDATED 6/1/21**

## **FACE COVERING REQUIREMENTS**

The State of Wisconsin has ended its mandate for masks wearing in public settings. Most municipalities in southeast Wisconsin have also lifted mask mandates leaving it up to businesses to determine their policy for wearing masks indoors.

**WCS has determined that it is in the best interest of staff, those served, and visitors that the agency continues to require that masks be worn:**

- within all common areas of WCS facilities
- in all areas where individuals are served
- in all WCS congregate care settings

**Mask wearing in private workspaces**, such as offices and cubicles, is optional and up to the discretion of each staff member.

**Mask wearing in conference meeting rooms** is up to the discretion of those attending.

## **Dining and Lunchrooms**

Community dining and sharing of snacks, food, and beverages **will continue to be prohibited** for the time being. Employee breakrooms will not be used for dining or eating. These spaces will only be used for warming meals and beverages. There should be no food left on tables and counters for sharing in employee breakrooms or offices and private workspaces.

## **Team Meetings**

WCS will continue to conduct Team Meetings using platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. When appropriate, in-person meetings will occur in an office setting in conference rooms that can accommodate social distancing and will include no more than **twenty-five (25) people. Mask wearing is up to the discretion of those attending the meeting, unless there are participants present.**

## **Supervision**

WCS will always provide consistent and ongoing supervision for all employees. WCS will provide supervision for all staff either remotely or in-person. In-person supervision will occur in spaces that are large enough for social distancing. There are clearly established lines of authority across the organization to manage the daily operations of programs and to provide updated information.

**UPDATED 6/1/21**

## **Travel**

WCS has adopted in-office travel guidelines that are specific to the COVID-19 outbreak.

- **Work Travel:** WCS is limiting employees to local travel that is essential to the provision of services, and to other required and essential meetings. Non-local (in-state) travel to meetings, conferences, and other gatherings will be allowed if it is deemed to be an essential part of our business. Out-of-state work-related travel will be allowed if it is deemed to be an essential part of our business.
- **Personal Travel:** For personal travel, WCS asks employees to follow the [CDC guidelines](#).

## **Screening**

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### **Employee Health Checks**

WCS has identified employee health as one of its top priorities. Each day before coming into any WCS worksite, employees are required to conduct self-health checks (using the WCS health screening checklist) for the presence of a fever and other COVID-19 symptoms by you or a member of your household. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring this practice occurs daily. If an employee experiences COVID-19 symptom prior to reporting into work, they should call their supervisor for guidance. For employees working in WCS youth and adult residential programs, a COVID-19 health screening (including temperature check) will be done on-site by, or in the presence of, a supervisor.

## **Rapid Response to Symptoms and Exposure to COVID-19**

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### **Employees Who Exhibit COVID-19 Symptoms**

Employees who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms will be sent home immediately or asked to remain home until symptoms have cleared. In situations where an employee reports a positive COVID-19 test, WCS will respond immediately to support the infected employee and co-workers and remove the employee from the workplace until they are cleared to return.

### **Vaccinated Persons Who Have Been Exposed to COVID-19**

Vaccinated persons with an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 are no longer required to quarantine if they meet all of the following criteria:

- ⇒ **Are fully vaccinated** (i.e., ≥two weeks following receipt of the second dose in a two-dose series, or ≥two weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine)
- ⇒ **Have remained asymptomatic** since the current COVID-19 exposure

Persons who DO NOT meet the above criteria **should continue to follow current [quarantine guidance](#)** after exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

**UPDATED 6/1/21**

### **CDC Guidance for Essential Workers Who Have Been Exposed to COVID-19**

To ensure continuity of operations of essential functions, the CDC has advised that critical and essential workers **may continue to work** following potential exposure to COVID-19.

The CDC advises that critical workers may be permitted to continue work following potential exposure to COVID-19 provided they remain asymptomatic and additional precautions are implemented to protect them and the community.

**A potential exposure means that you are in a household and contact with an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID19, or you have had close contact (within six feet) of an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID19.** The timeframe for having contact with an individual includes the period of 48 hours before the individual became symptomatic.

**WCS employees/critical workers who have had an exposure but remain asymptomatic should adhere to the following practices prior to and during their shift:**

1. **Pre-Screen:** Temperature check and assess symptoms before an employee begins their shift
2. **Regular Monitoring:** As long as the employee does not have symptoms they should continue to monitor under the supervision of manager or supervisor.
3. **Wear a Mask:** The employee should always wear a mask in the workplace for 14 days after the last exposure.
4. **Social Distance:** The employees should always maintain at least six feet and practice social distancing.
5. **Disinfect and Clean Workspace:** Clean and disinfect all areas of such as offices, bathrooms, common areas and shared electronic equipment routinely.

**UPDATED 6/1/21**

## ***Flexible Work Options***

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### **Working Remotely**

As the rate of vaccinations increases and schools and daycares re-open, WCS anticipates that all staff will return to their work locations on a more regular basis. In some cases, WCS will continue to allow staff to work remotely as needed and appropriate to maintain a safe work environment. Such determinations are made on a case-by-case basis involving the employee's supervisor, program director or administrator, and where appropriate in consultation with Human Resources.

### **Modified Work Schedules**

See language above under working remotely.

### **Staff Who are Over Age 60 or Have Underlying Health Conditions**

WCS will make every effort to accommodate individuals over the age of 60 and those with underlying health conditions, which may include but not be limited to extended time for working remotely, modifications of work schedules, and granting additional time off and leave from work.

## ***Risk Mitigation***

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WCS will always maintain an adequate supply of PPE, paper goods, hand soap, and hand sanitizer to promote hygiene among employees.

## ***Education and Cultural Practices***

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### **Staff Communication**

WCS will regularly communicate the new *Principles and Practices* (e.g., face coverings, physical distancing, hygiene) that are expected in the workplace. This will include communication through email, internal intranet, and signs throughout the facilities.

### **Education and Training**

WCS will provide online or other socially distanced education about job-specific topics such as cleaning and disinfecting protocols, appropriate PPE usage, effectively communicating and enforcing physical distancing guidelines to service users.

### **Self-Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic can feel overwhelming due to new information, long work hours, and caring for yourself and your family. It is normal to feel stressed during this uncertain time. Emotions in response to uncertainty may include anxiety, fear, anger, and sadness. It is important to pause for a moment and collect yourself, and to reach a place of calmness. There are several websites that can provide information on self-care. The WCS Community Building Milwaukee project offers [Virtual Circles of Support](#) to help manage the stress of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Employees are also encouraged to reach out to the [WCS Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) at 1-800-236-3231.

### **Cultural Practices**

WCS understands that ongoing adherence to these *Principles and Practices* may conflict with some staff cultural practices. With this in mind, WCS leadership will make every effort to listen to all staff concerns about these practices, while maintaining an organizational emphasis on the collective interest of our staff and the individuals we serve.

# CONSUMERS / PARTICIPANTS AND VISITORS

## *Risk Awareness*

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**UPDATED 6/1/21**

### **Health Screenings/Checks**

As the rate of vaccinations increases, WCS will limit the use of health screenings to select locations to detect the presence of COVID-19 symptoms. Most essential services require some level of face-to-face or in-person contact. When conducting face-to-face contacts, staff will continue to have the option of using a symptom checklist (Public Health Questionnaire) to ensure that individuals do not have COVID-19 symptoms, practice social distancing, and wear a mask/face covering when appropriate.

### **Securing Signatures**

WCS will utilize appropriate alternate methods to obtain signatures from individuals who participate in programming. This includes electronic signatures, paper signatures, and entering notes in individual records if acceptable.

### **Social Distancing**

WCS requires that all staff, program participants, and visitors practice and are mindful of social distancing behavior and guidelines issued by the CDC to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Minimal guidelines include maintaining a distance of at least six feet from the closest person.

### **Transportation**

There are times when a WCS employee is required to transport an individual in their personal vehicle. When this is required, employees and participants will be provided with protective items such as masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer. Any transported individual will be required to sit at least six feet away from the driver to maintain proper social distance. WCS will also provide these staff members with sanitizing spray and wipes to disinfect seats, door handles, and surfaces after each transport.

## *Education and Communication*

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### **Sharing Guidelines**

WCS will talk with program participants about the importance of universal hygiene methods, face coverings, and physical distancing. This may be communicated in-person, over the phone, through emails, or through signage around the building.

### **Identifying Participant Needs**

WCS recognizes that during the COVID-19 pandemic, certain basic need items may be in higher demand than usual and in short supply. We are cognizant of the lack of basic need items and are committed to helping individuals find ways to meet such needs. We will work closely with each person around resource management and utilizing public resources when appropriate.

# WORKPLACE

## Disinfecting Practices

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### **Daily Disinfecting**

WCS has implemented measures to ensure that daily cleaning and disinfecting occurs at all our program sites, especially on hard surfaces that are frequently touched such as doorknobs, handles, light switches, elevators, countertops, and tabletops, etc. WCS will continue to follow [CDC guidelines](#) for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces. Employees will be given the supplies needed to disinfect computer equipment and electronic devices, phones, desks and surfaces, light switches and handles, key cards and keys, and personal vehicles when used to transport participants.

*Please note in worksites that are not under the control of WCS, we will work with the responsible authority to ensure this is being addressed.*

## Environmental Controls

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**UPDATED 6/1/21**

### **Entrance Points**

WCS has established the following procedures for the entrance point of each building/office spaces that we control:

- At select locations, WCS will screen for COVID-19 by using a Symptom Checklist/Public Health Questionnaire, which includes a temperature check.
- Masks will be distributed to individuals/visitors who do not have one and they will be required to wear masks while in a WCS controlled building.
- Hand sanitizer will be available, and individuals/visitors are required to use it before proceeding into the building.
- Ventilation will be increased. Unless doing so is a violation of code, a threat to safety, or poses a similar type of problem, WCS will:
  - increase the amount of outdoor air that circulates into the building/room
  - run HVAC fans continuously where possible

### **Communal Touchpoints**

WCS has established the following procedures for communal touchpoints:

- All trash and recycling bins will not require a person to touch the container in order to dispose of something.
- Where possible, employees will not share desks, or offices. In those program areas where this is not possible, extra care should be taken to wash hands, disinfect, sanitize, and wear masks. Employees should limit sharing of writing utensils, whiteboard markers, or other work tools and equipment.
- Where possible, please limit the sharing of cell and desk phones. In those program areas where this is not possible, extra care should be taken to wash hands, disinfect, sanitize, and wear masks. Office phones should be wiped down at least daily with disinfecting wipes,

paying particular attention to the receiver and cradle. Cell phones should be wiped down at least daily with disinfecting wipes or a mixture of 70% isopropyl alcohol/30% water a soft lint-free cloth. No liquids should be directly sprayed on the device.

- Users will be required to clean and disinfect communally used equipment (e.g., printers, desktop computers) before and after use and make sanitizers available in the area. *Signs will be posted as reminders.* This includes the following procedures for communal office equipment, such as printers and fax machines:

*Displays/control panels/buttons will be wiped down after each use using a microfiber cloth with a mixture of 70% isopropyl alcohol/30% water. Cloth and cleaning mixture are provided near every shared device. No liquids should be sprayed directly on the device.*

*Equipment will be fully wiped down using a microfiber cloth with a mixture of 70% isopropyl alcohol/30% water at the end of each day.*

- Where possible, WCS will install controls at transaction points that work to minimize touchpoints and areas of close contact.

## **Workspace Design**

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### **Workstations**

- Workstations will be set up with at least six feet of distance between people. If physical distancing between workstations is not possible, barriers or partitions may be installed.
- Where possible, staff will have a designated workstation to minimize the number of people sharing space.

## **Workflow Design**

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### **Flow of Individuals Between and Within Offices**

WCS will continuously evaluate and adjust the flow and presence of individuals in office and program areas to ensure there is appropriate social distancing space between individuals and that all individuals can avoid contact with each other (i.e., entryways, stairwells, aisles, necessary waiting areas). We will modify work areas as needed to improve the safety and well-being of staff and to make them feel as comfortable as possible. Furniture and seating in waiting areas will be arranged to accommodate social distancing and to discourage unnecessary waiting and loitering.

## **Controlled Access**

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### **Access to WCS Buildings**

**WCS is controlling access to our facilities in the following ways:**

- Occupancy: WCS will limit the number of individuals allowed in each facility at any given time.
- Packages: All packages must be delivered at the main entrance of WCS-controlled buildings and will be distributed by WCS staff and security.

- Security Protocols: WCS will continue to have Security at the main location on 37th Street and will visit other locations as needed to ensure that buildings are secure and that non-essential visits are not taking place.
- Loading Docks/Service Elevator: WCS will continue to utilize a large freight elevator at the 37th Street building as needed and limit the level of accessibility by vendor and others.

### Access Within WCS Buildings

**WCS is controlling access within our facilities in the following ways:**

- Elevator Use: WCS will limit the number of individuals on elevators to three at a time and all riders must use masks.
- Stairwell Use: WCS encourages staff to utilize stairwells versus elevators, and practice social distancing at all times. The 37th Street location will have multiple stairwells open to accommodate staff egress from the building and to limit the use of elevators.
- Bathrooms: All WCS restrooms will be limited to one person at a time, and masks should always be worn. Thorough handwashing of at least 20 seconds will be required after each use.
- Kitchen and Break Rooms: Community dining and sharing of snacks, food, and beverages will continue to be prohibited. Employee breakrooms will not be used for dining or eating. These spaces will only be used for warming meals, and beverages. There should be no food left on tables and counters for sharing in employee breakrooms, offices, or private workspaces.

*Please note that for buildings and worksites not under the control of WCS, we will work with the responsible entity to ensure that the above is addressed to a level that maintains a safe work environment.*

### **VIOLATIONS OF PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES**

If a WCS employee, program participant or visitor sees any violation of these *Principles and Practices*, they should report the violation to a supervisor, program director or building security.

