



# GRANVILLE VANCE

public health

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DATE: April 2, 2020

TO: Businesses and Employers in Granville and Vance counties

FROM: Lisa Macon Harrison, MPH, Health Director, and Shauna Guthrie, MD, MPH, Medical Director

SUBJECT: Recommendations to Minimize the Spread of COVID-19

On March 27, Governor Roy Cooper issued Executive Order 121, a statewide Stay at Home Order beginning Monday, March 30, 2020 at 5 p.m. until April 29, 2020 to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. This order directs people to stay at home except to visit essential businesses, to exercise outdoors or to help a family member. Essential businesses are defined in the Order and establishments required to close under previous executive orders must remain closed. Businesses and not-for-profit organizations that are deemed essential as defined by the Order do not need any documentation from the State to continue operations. Employees are not required to have specific documentation to report to work under this Order. Additionally, the Order bans gatherings of more than 10 people and directs everyone to physically stay at least six feet apart from others. While Governor Cooper is seeking voluntary cooperation, state and local law enforcement officers have the authority to enforce the Order. For more information about Executive Order 121 see the [executive order](#) and the accompanying [FAQs](#).

For businesses that remain in operation, Granville Vance Public Health recommends all businesses follow guidance originally provided by the NC Department of Health and Human Services, CDC, and OSHA. Businesses can play an important role in protecting the community, customers, and staff from the spread of COVID-19 by doing the following:

- **Actively encourage sick employees to stay home.** Maximize flexibility in sick leave policies and review absenteeism policies to make sure employees are not being encouraged to come to work if they are sick.
  - **Individuals who have fever and cough and/or other symptoms of respiratory illness, even if it is not from COVID-19, should isolate themselves as if they have COVID-19** to reduce the risk of making others sick.
  - Employees may discontinue isolation and return to normal activities when it has been at least 7 days since their first day of illness AND they have been without fever for three days (72 hours) AND their other symptoms are improving, in consultation with their healthcare

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- providers and state and local health departments.
- **Employers should not ask for a negative COVID-19 test or a note from a medical provider for employees to return to work.**
  - **Check employee temperatures daily for signs of fever, indicated by a temperature of 100.4 or higher**, and monitor for lower respiratory issues such as cough and/or shortness of breath. Employees exhibiting these symptoms should stay home – if they are already in the workplace they should be separated or sent home immediately.
  - **Support respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene for employees, customers, and worksite visitors:**
    - Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles.
    - Provide soap and water in the workplace. If soap and water are not readily available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol. If hands are visibly dirty, soap and water should be chosen over hand sanitizer. Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained.
    - Place hand sanitizers in multiple locations to encourage hand hygiene.
    - Place posters that encourage hand hygiene to help stop the spread at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen. Infographics can be found on the [NC DHHS website](#).
    - Discourage handshaking – encourage the use of other noncontact methods of greeting.
  - **Frequently disinfect commonly touched surfaces and objects** such as electronics, door knobs, faucet handles, counter tops, cash machine key pads, etc. Perform **enhanced cleaning** and disinfection after persons suspected/confirmed to have COVID-19 have been in the facility.
  - If there is a known or suspected positive case in your workplace, **individuals who were in close contact with the sick individual should practice strict social distancing and self-monitor for symptoms.**
  - **Identify where and how workers might be exposed to COVID-19 at work** and take steps to minimize exposure.
  - **Assess your essential functions** and the reliance that others and the community have on your services or products. Determine how you will operate if absenteeism spikes from increases in sick employees, those who stay home to care for sick family members. Cross-train employees for key functions so that daily schedules can continue relatively uninterrupted by potential employee absences.
  - **Consider temporarily assigning employees at high risk for coronavirus to non-public-contact duties**, such as people with underlying health conditions, people 65 or older, those with weakened immune systems or those who are pregnant.

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- **Use teleworking technologies (videoconferencing or teleconferencing) to the greatest extent possible**, including holding meetings virtually. Consider canceling, adjusting, or postponing in-person work-related meetings or gatherings of more than 10 people. When videoconferencing or teleconferencing is not possible, hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces.
- **Establish policies and practices for social distancing**. Social distancing means avoiding large gatherings and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others when possible (e.g., breakrooms and cafeterias).
- Consider **improving the engineering controls using the building ventilation system** including increasing ventilation rates and/or increasing the percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system.

Many of these measures are the similar those you can be doing on an individual basis to protect yourself and loved ones from COVID-19. Limiting the exposure of your nose, mouth and eyes to unwashed hands can help to protect from the spread of all germs and illnesses. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds at a time. Social distancing – staying home as much as possible – is incredibly important to reduce the spread of infection and limit the number of people that get sick at the same time. This will protect lives and avoid strain on our health care system.

Additional information and guidance tailored to businesses and employers is available through [OSHA](#), [CDC](#), and [NC Department of Health and Human Services](#).

As questions and concerns about coronavirus (COVID-19) increase across North Carolina, we'd like to encourage promotion of the statewide Coronavirus Helpline (1-866-462-3821) for the public, which is answered 24 hours a day / 7 days a week. Please let us know if there are additional ways the health department can support you to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in our communities.

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