

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF STARKE COUNTY

PHASED RE-OPENING POLICIES

DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Version 1.0

On May 1 2020 Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb announced a policy of phased re-opening of Indiana State and Local Government, business and industry, which policy included advice to local governmental entities, but also provided ongoing authority and responsibility to local units, including counties, to craft specific policies appropriate for the unique conditions prevalent in their respective communities.

THEREFORE: the Board of Commissioners of Starke County (the “Commissioners”), in consultation with the County Health Nurse, with Starke County’s Elected Officials and Department Heads, and with the *ad hoc* COVID-19 Policies Committee hereby issues the following **PHASED RE-OPENING POLICIED DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC** effective commencing May 6, 2020 and continuing until modified by further order of the Commissioners.

I. **Application of Policy.** This policy is applicable to all Starke County Officials, offices, and activities except:

(a) Judicial offices, staff and employees who are under the jurisdiction of the Starke Circuit Court and the Indiana Supreme Court; *and*,

(b) officers, facilities and staff of the Sheriff’s Department, who are under the Sheriff’s supervision and control.

II. **Effect of Re-opening Policy.** This **Phased Re-Opening Policy** is intended as a modification of the current county policies applicable during the COVID-19 pandemic emergency. Policies set forth in the most recent version of those policies (ver. 3) shall continue unless specifically amended by this document.

III. **Re-Opening Calendar.** Following is the calendar for phased re-opening of Starke County offices, business and activities:

DATE	PHASED RE-OPENING CHANGE
MAY 6, 2020	Notice and copies of this document: <i>Phased Re-Opening Policies During the COVID-19 Pandemic</i> including Appendices A and B delivered to Elected Officials and Department Heads, with instructions to distribute to staff.
MAY 11	<p>Employees not in the high-risk category return to work; high risk employees continue to be on call during working hours. High risk employees work from home, if possible. County offices remain closed to the public except by appointment and after a showing of compelling need and with use of appropriate masks.</p> <p>Officials, staff and employees required to observe compliance with social distancing and hygiene rules as set forth by Co. Health Nurse Frank Lynch in Appendix A. Staff may use masks in their own offices, but must use masks when visiting other offices – communications by telephone or other electronic means strongly encouraged for inter-office messaging, even inside the same building.</p>
MAY 26	High-risk employees return to work at their usual stations. County offices open to the public, but subject to use of appropriate masks by public visitors. Nevertheless, public strongly encouraged to communicate in writing or electronically, if possible. Use of masks by staff to continue as shown above.

IV. **High Risk Personnel.** Employees who are at increased risk for complications from COVID-19 due to being over age 60 or subject to underlying health conditions are urged to consult their physician about steps they can take to protect their health. These may include requesting a temporary change in job location, hours, assignment or duties, or implementation of additional protective measures to reduce their exposure to others or chances of being infected. If an employee at risk for complications from COVID-19 and their physician agree that increased social distancing in the workplace is prudent, the employee should contact their local HR office to formally request a temporary change. Human Resources will confidentially evaluate the request, explore alternatives, and attempt to appropriately address the employee’s health concerns while maintaining Starke County’s operations. A doctor’s note may be required. Except for employees who formally request a change in job circumstances due to underlying health conditions, employees will generally not be reassigned to new duties, locations, or roles or be provided with paid sick/release time solely to address concerns about the potential for COVID-19 infection.

V. **Social Distancing and Hygiene.** Officials, staff and employees shall strictly adhere to all social distancing and hygiene standards as set out by County Health Nurse Frank Lynch in the attached Appendix A, the terms of which are incorporated into this policy document by reference. Elected officials and department heads shall be vigilant to ensure that these standards are consistently and strictly observed. Questions about these standards should be directed to Co. Health Nurse Frank Lynch. Please remember that the COVID-19 virus is highly contagious and is known to cause dangerous and life-threatening disease.

VI. **Highway Department.** In addition to the terms of this policy document, all staff and employees of the Starke County Highway Department are required to strictly adhere to the standards and procedures set forth in Appendix B, applicable to the highway department. The Board of Commissioners finds that the standards and procedures set forth in Appendix B are also instructive throughout the offices and operations of the county, and their use for guidance is encouraged wherever they are relevant.

VII. **Failure to Comply.** The Commissioners consider the health and safety of our elected officials, staff, employees and the public to be paramount. Failure of any person to comply with the terms of this policy may endanger the health and safety not just of the person at fault, but may harm untold numbers of others. Therefore, failure to comply with the terms set forth herein, and in Appendix A, and Appendix B may result in serious consequences including suspension without pay or in termination for cause.

VIII. **Adoption, Modifications.** The key terms of this policy were approved by vote of the Board of Commissioners at their regularly scheduled public meeting on May 4 2020, and addressed in greater detail by their designated *ad hoc* Task Force on May 5, 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic is a rapidly evolving situation, and changes to these policies will likely be forthcoming. All Starke County Elected Officials, Department Heads, staff, employees, contractors and consultants shall be vigilant for policy updates as they are issued.

All of which is approved as the official policy of Starke County by the Board of Commissioners of Starke County this ____ day of May, 2020 by the following vote:

COMMISSIONERS OF STARKE COUNTY

VOTE

Charles Chesak, President

Kathryn Norem, Vice President

Bryan Cavender, Commissioner

ATTEST:

*Rachel Oesterreich, Auditor
Of Starke County Indiana*

Appendix A

County Health Nurse Frank Lynch

INFECTION PREVENTION –

- Place signage for staff and visitors to self-monitor for symptoms, remain home when ill and contact their health care provider for guidance about symptoms, isolation and testing if needed.
- Encourage social distancing staying 6 feet from others. Close contact is considered within 6 feet for about 10 minutes or longer or having direct contact such as kissing, sharing food or drinks, or coughing/sneezing.
- Where able provide physical barriers between employees and customers (plexi- glass) or spacers such as tables in front of counters or desks.
- Encourage respiratory etiquette, covering your coughs and sneezes.
- Promote frequent handwashing, warm water, soap, 20 seconds minimum.
- Hand sanitizer when not able to wash hands.
 1. Make hand sanitizer available for customers/public where able.
 2. Place signage instructing to use hand sanitizer when entering area before fill out forms, etc.
 3. Hand sanitizer must contain at least 60% alcohol to be effective.
- Discourage workers from using other workers' phones, desks, computers and equipment as much as possible.
- Provide public with tissues and keep trash receptacles in close proximity.
- Set a schedule to clean and disinfect high contact areas (counters, pens, phones, etc). Use best judgement as to frequency, cleaning hourly or after each customer?
- Read the directions on your disinfectant whether it is Lysol, 409 or Clorox as to how long the area needs to remain wet to work.
- 1/3 cup bleach to 1 gallon of water is effective and needs to be left wet for 1 minute to disinfect. Use paper towels and be careful with your clothing. You should wear gloves and need to wash your hands after cleaning surfaces.

MASKS –

Extended and Reuse General Recommendations

- Hang used masks in a designated storage area or **keep them in a clean, breathable container such as a paper bag between uses writing the workers name on the bag.** To minimize potential cross-contamination, store masks so that they do not touch each other and the person using the mask is clearly identified. Storage containers should be disposed of or cleaned regularly (spray the inside of the paper bag with Lysol and allow to air dry).
- Clean hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after touching or adjusting the mask (if necessary for comfort or to maintain fit).

- Avoid touching the inside of the mask. If inadvertent contact is made with the inside of the respirator, perform hand hygiene as described above.
- Discard any mask that is obviously damaged or becomes hard to breathe through.

GLOVES –

Good hand hygiene is what is needed, but if gloves are worn, keep in mind that once you touch something they are contaminated. When you make contact with a customer or their belongings (cash, id, paperwork, etc), you will spread germs to everything you touch beyond that point. Remove the gloves without touching your skin, wash or sanitize your hands and put on new gloves. DO NOT SANITIZE GLOVES.