

# Real Estate COVID-19 Requirements

## Summary of March 17, 2021 changes:

- Adding Phase 3 requirements and changes including:
  - Increase office capacity to 50%.
  - Remove the requirement that clients must make an appointment to go to an office.
  - Increase number of allowed individuals to “show” properties at one time to 10.

## In Phase 1

- Open houses are prohibited state-wide.

## In Phase 2:

- Office capacity limited to 25%.
- Open houses are permitted. No more than ten people onsite at a time. Physically distancing to ensure 6 feet between participants should be maintained where possible.
- Property viewings, inspections, appraisals, and final walk-throughs shall be arranged by appointment and are limited to five people on site (this does not include the real estate agent/realtor), exercising social distancing at all times.

## In Phase 3:

- Office capacity limited to 50%.
- Property viewings, inspections, appraisals, and final walk-throughs shall be arranged by appointment and are limited to ten people on site (this does not include the real estate agent/realtor), exercising social distancing at all times.

## In all phases

### **Safety and Health Requirements**

All real estate brokers must post signage at the entrance to their business requiring their customers to use cloth face coverings when inside the business.

### **Real Estate industry specific requirements**

Below is a list of additional requirements that must be met before resuming operations for Real Estate activity.

#### **Out of office activities:**

In-person residential and commercial real estate activities under RCW 18.85.011(17) and related activities performed by real estate brokers and industry partners for both improved and unimproved real property shall only be permitted with the following limitations:

- a) Remote meetings with customers are encouraged where possible; and
- b) In-person activities including property viewings, inspections, appraisals, and final walk-throughs are limited to the maximum number of people on site for the counties phase, exercising social distancing at all times.

It is permissible to engage in real estate sales, leasing, and property management as real estate brokers, appraisers, settlement agents and escrow officers, property inspectors (including consultants such as

engineers, architects, and others routinely engaged in such transactions), property stagers, movers, photographers, sign installers, mortgage loan originators, processors, and underwriters, and other necessary office personnel including IT professionals, and back office staff necessary to maintain office operations, along with those government workers necessary to review real estate excise tax and record documents.

All real estate and mortgage activities must meet social distancing and appropriate health and worker protection measures before proceeding. For in-person activities, real estate brokers and industry partners must wear cloth face coverings and should require clients and customers to do the same.

#### **Office activities for residential and commercial real estate firms:**

##### **Social Distancing:**

Gatherings of any size must be prevented by taking breaks and performing any activities in shifts, including lunch. Any time two or more persons must meet, ensure a minimum of 6-feet of separation.

1. Identify and control “choke points” and “high-risk areas” at locations where workers and members of the public typically congregate so that social distancing is always maintained. Consider relocating from small areas into larger rooms to accommodate more area for social distancing.
2. Minimize interactions during activities; ensure a minimum of 6-foot separation by physical barriers, and/or marking floors with tape. Limit the number of participants based on facility size and activities to allow for a 6-foot separation.
3. Arrange furniture to encourage social distancing.
4. Limit guest occupancy to the appropriate percentage maximum building occupancy or lower for the phase of the county.

##### **Sick Employee and Independent Contractor Plan:**

1. Screen all workers at the beginning of their day by asking them if they have a fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle aches, or new loss of taste or smell.
2. Ask the employee and independent contractor to take their temperature at home prior to arriving at work or take their temperature when they arrive. Thermometers used shall be ‘no touch’ or ‘no contact’ to the greatest extent possible. If a ‘no touch’ or ‘no contact’ thermometer is not available, the thermometer must be properly sanitized between each use. Any worker with a temperature of 100.4°F or higher is considered to have a fever and must be sent home.
3. Create policies which encourage workers to stay home or leave the location when feeling sick or when they have been in close contact with a confirmed positive case. If they develop symptoms of acute respiratory illness, they must seek medical attention and inform their employer.
4. Have employees and independent contractors inform their supervisors if they have a sick family member at home with COVID-19. If an employee or independent contractor has a family member sick with COVID-19, that employee or independent contractor must follow the isolation/quarantine requirements as established by the State Department of Health.
5. Instruct workers to report to their supervisor if they develop symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle aches, or new loss of taste or smell). If symptoms develop during a shift, the worker should be immediately sent home. If symptoms develop while the worker is not working, the worker should not return to work until they have been evaluated by a healthcare provider.

6. If an employee or independent contractor is confirmed to have a COVID-19 infection, employers should inform fellow employees and independent contractors of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The employer should instruct fellow employees and independent contractors on how to proceed based on the CDC Public Health Recommendations for Community-Related Exposure.

**Training:**

1. All employees and independent contractors must be trained on the worksite's policies, these requirements and all relevant sanitization and social distancing protocols. They must also be trained about COVID-19 and how to prevent its transmission. This can be accomplished through weekly safety meetings, where attendance is logged by the system, supervisor, or COVID site supervisor.

**Facilities:**

1. Restrict access where unauthorized visitors may enter, most specifically "back of the house" doors and entry points.
2. Real estate businesses that operate an office facility must also follow safety requirements outlined in the professional services guidance for reopening office space working environments.

All real estate brokers, firms, independent contractors and industry partners operating have a general obligation to keep a safe and healthy facility in accordance with state and federal law, and comply with the following COVID-19 worksite-specific safety practices, as outlined in Governor Jay Inslee's Healthy Washington plan, and in accordance with the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries [General Requirements and Prevention Ideas for Workplaces](#) and the Washington State Department of Health Workplace and Employer Resources & Recommendations at <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Coronavirus/workplace>.