



## SHOWING AND OPEN HOUSE CONSIDERATIONS

We are now in another new phase of the COVID-19 pandemic however, most of the guidelines and protocols for your business remain the same. All businesses are required to adopt a [Preparedness Plan](#) and follow the published guidelines from DEED, MDH, CDC and OSHA (as of June 29, 2020.) The Preparedness Plan must contain certain items however, you will need to incorporate site-specific best practices for your particular business operations surrounding health and wellness, social distancing, cleaning, sanitation and protection, and operations and communications with your sales associates, clients, and visitors in mind. Adapting your plan and policies to accommodate showings and open houses will be important in helping Minnesotan's stay safe.

Following are more specific items for your consideration.

### **Health and Wellness**

- Check your Preparedness Plan to determine company protocols for sales associates or office staff who are ill or have come in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 before they commence an open house or showing. Per the [MDH](#), all persons who are sick should stay home.
- Consider [OSHA](#) safety protocols for workers when they will be meeting with the public. OSHA requires employers to assess occupational hazards to which their workers may be exposed. The [Control and Prevention](#) page provides guidance for controlling risks for worker exposures.
- Consult with your seller clients about whether and how consumers will enter their property during the listing and marketing of the property. Consider whether your client is in a vulnerable population and whether circumstances will allow for showings and open houses. If your seller client or anyone residing in the property as tested positive for COVID-19 and are under quarantine, or anyone in the property has symptoms, then do not hold open houses, or allow showings until the quarantine period as expired.
- Outline steps to minimize spread of the virus and comply with health and safety requirements before offering showings or open houses and during and after an open house or showing including:

- **Protecting Vulnerable Populations:** The CDC recommends that people who are in this category for a higher risk of severe illness should stay home and away from other people as much as possible. Adopt protocols to provide accommodations for high risk and vulnerable populations.
  - Older Adults (65+)
  - People living in long-term care facilities
  - People with Asthma
  - People with HIV
  - People at High Risk of Severe Illness
  
- **Hand Hygiene:** Consider the following:
  - Requiring workers and customers to wash or sanitize hands prior to entry and after exiting the property.
  - Providing hand washing stations or 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer for use prior to entering and after exiting the property.
  - Posting [hand hygiene posters](#)
  - Consider prohibiting use of the restrooms in the home. If they are allowed to be used, consider supplying paper towels for use to open and close the restroom door and a touch-free trash-receptacle so the paper towel can be readily disposed of when operating the door.
  
- **Respiratory Etiquette:** Consider the following:
  - Governor Walz's Executive Order (EO) 20-81, effective Friday, July 24, 2020 at 11:59 PM, requires Minnesotans to wear a face covering in indoor businesses and indoor public settings. Minnesotan's must also wear face coverings outdoors when it is possible to maintain social distancing. Therefore, per this new EO, in combination with DEED's General Industry Guidance issued in June, Realtors® are required to always use a face covering when working with a client. Private property being opened to the general public for showing or open houses should also comply with these indoor business and public setting requirements.
  - Under EO 20-81, businesses must require face coverings for all persons entering the property, unless the persons entering are exempt under EO 20-81. (See our FAQ on EO 20-81 for further details). This includes all workers, customers, and visitors.
  - Providing cloth face coverings to visitors that do not have them.

- Establish protocols for clients or customers who refuse to wear a face covering, and are not exempt from wearing one, where wearing one is possible. Businesses should not provide services under these circumstances when workers and other customers/clients cannot be protected.
  - Businesses must provide accommodations to persons, including their workers and customers, who have a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that makes it unreasonable for the person to maintain a face covering. Where possible, you must establish alternatives for these individuals such as providing service options that do not require a customer or worker to enter the property (e.g. virtual showings). Note, businesses may not require customers provide proof of a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability or require customers to explain the nature of their conditions or disability.
  - Instructing workers, customers, clients, guests, and visitors to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and to avoid touching their face, particularly their nose and eyes, with their hands.
  - Providing tissues and touch-free receptacles for immediate disposal with the expectation that workers dispose of tissues and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward.
  - EO 20-81 requires that businesses must post one (1) or more signs that are visible to all persons, including workers, customers, and visitors instructing them to wear face coverings as required by EO 20-81.
  - Posting [respiratory etiquette posters](#)
  - Limiting the amount of time allowed in the property.
  
  - Reduce face-to-face interaction as much as possible such as standing to the side or behind the customer or client.
  - No food or drinks should be shared communally.
  
  - Check local ordinances to determine if there are more restrictive face covering regulations in place than those issued in EO 20-81.
- **Ventilation**: Consider the following:
- Increase the outdoor air-percentage to increase dilution of contaminants whenever possible.

- Consider measures to prohibit ill persons from entering the property or postpone showings and open houses if persons residing in the property are ill, such as:
  - Adopting the [MDH health screening checklist](#) for workers, customers, clients, and visitors; and
  - Posting a version of the MDH [Stop! Help Protect our Residents](#) posters asking ill people not to visit; and
  - Advising clients to self-check their body temperature the day of showing or open house utilizing the [MN Symptom Screener](#) or [Self-Screen Tool](#)
  - Post signage and develop messaging that if [customers or clients are sick](#) or have any symptoms compatible with COVID-19 to not attend a showing or open house. They should also stay home if they have close contact with someone experiencing symptoms compatible with COVID-19. Postpone all showings and open houses if someone residing in the property is COVID-19 positive or has signs or symptoms of illness until the quarantine period has expired.

### **Social distancing and Minimizing Transmission**

- Stay home if you are sick and consider avoiding showings or open houses if any person residing in the home is sick until the quarantine period has expired.
- If anyone visiting the home begins to feel unwell while in the home, they should leave immediately and isolate themselves at home.
- Evaluate the property space for access and regulate visitor movement within the property maintaining at least six (6) feet of separation.
  - You will need to ensure that workers and customers engage in social distancing.
  - Do not allow workers and customers to congregate in rooms that do not allow social distancing.
  - Must limit occupancy to the number of individuals at any one time for whom physical distancing of six feet can be maintained.
  - Limit the number of persons accompanying the customer/client at the time the showing or open house is being provided.
- Create and follow a business plan for social distancing within the home.
  - Consider adjusting the flow through the property such as limited or one-way movement through hallways, bedrooms, or other tight spaces where appropriate distancing may be difficult.
  - Change configurations in the home if needed to adjust the flow to accommodate social distancing.
- Consider ways to make interactions between customers and associates as contactless as reasonably possible.

- Consider requesting the seller open insider doors and turn on lights so neither you nor the visitors will need to.
- Minimize the unnecessary exchange or sharing of pens, tablets, or other tools when you are asking visitors to sign in. Any shared supplies or equipment should be wiped down before and after each use by a customer or client and dispose of the wipe accordingly.
- Consider displaying and distributing property information electronically versus handing out brochures or print outs.

### **Cleaning and Disinfecting**

- Consult with your client before using any cleaning products and recommend that your client disinfect their home before and after showings or open house, especially commonly touched areas like doorknobs and faucet handles.
- There may be cleaning and disinfecting requirements in MN if holding an open house to the general public. Work with your seller client to follow [CDC](#) and [MDH](#) guidance on maintaining regular cleaning and frequent high touch disinfecting .
- Consider prohibiting visitors' use of the home's bathroom or other facilities and adopt cleaning and disinfecting protocols if they are utilized.

### **Operations and Communications:** Consider the following:

- Using signs or other customer communication measures to control building access including appointment times, entrance controls, self-check measures for visitors, and emailing screening surveys the day of the visit.
- Have visitors respond to screening survey questions upon arrival and check-in, verify they have read the screening survey and can respond “no” to all questions.
- Use signage and customer communication to regulate customer movement into and around the property.
- Advertise your business protocols to customers and clients so they are aware.
- Decline to provide access to the property if there is any suspicion that they are sick or symptomatic, and advise them to leave the property.
- Avoid actions that will result in housing [discrimination](#) or [stigma](#).