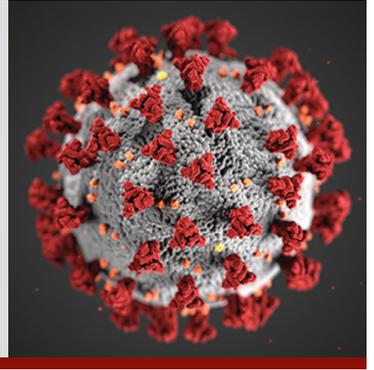


COVID-19 Guidance on Ventilation in the Workplace



The Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) and its Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) are committed to protecting the health and safety of Washington state workers especially during the challenging COVID-19 pandemic.

Ensuring adequate ventilation throughout the work environment can help to maintain a safe and healthy workplace. Employers should work with a heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) professional to optimize building ventilation. An HVAC professional can ensure that the ventilation system is operating as intended.

The following tips can help reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19:

- Ensure a system for preventing sick employees to be present at work is implemented per DOSH directive DD 1.70 (www.Lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-rules/enforcement-policies/DD170.pdf).
- Ensure all HVAC systems are fully functional, especially those shut down or operating at reduced capacity during the pandemic. Demand-controlled ventilation may be adjusted or disabled to ensure maximum outdoor air.
- Use HVAC system filters with a Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) rating of 13 or higher, where feasible. MERV is a measure of how well filters capture particles. The higher the number, the better the capture of particles. Ninety-percent of particles are captured in filters with a MERV rating of 13.
- Inspect filters and seals monthly. Eliminate gaps around filters that allow non-filtered air to recirculate. Change filters and clean the system as needed.
- Bring in as much fresh air as possible by increasing the HVAC system's outdoor air intake and reducing recirculated air. Open windows or other sources of fresh air where possible, weather permitting.
- Be sure exhaust air is not pulled back into the building from HVAC air intakes or open windows.
- Turn off ceiling fans or adjust them to pull air up rather than down to reduce particle dispersal.
- Remove or redirect personal fans to prevent blowing air from one worker to another.
- Consider using portable, high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) fan/filtration systems to increase clean air, especially in higher-risk areas. Avoid use of ionizers or air purifiers that generate ozone, a health hazard itself.
- When changing filters, wear appropriate personal protective equipment including a respirator with N-95 filters, eye protection (safety glasses, goggles, or face shields), and disposable gloves.
- Make sure exhaust fans in restrooms are fully functional, operating at maximum capacity, and are set to remain on.
- Encourage workers to report any safety and health concerns.

Free safety and health assistance for employers is available from L&I's Consultation Program: DOSHConsultation@Lni.wa.gov or www.Lni.wa.gov/DOSHConsultation.

L&I Division of Occupational Safety and Health COVID-19 webpage includes resources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the Washington State Department of Health: www.Lni.wa.gov/CovidSafety.

Upon request, foreign language support and formats for persons with disabilities are available. Call 1-800-547-8367. TDD users, call 711. L&I is an equal opportunity employer.

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Division of Occupational Safety and Health



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