



House Clerk's Office

COVID Policies and Procedures*

The Virginia House of Delegates is a busy, active workplace for many employees as well as an appealing destination for daily visitors, especially during legislative sessions. It is the policy of the House of Delegates, under the direction of the Speaker, to take all reasonable precautions to ensure the health and safety of every delegate, full- and part-time employee, page, intern, visitor, and guest of the Virginia House of Delegates while it conducts the people's business.

It is imperative that any Member, staff, lobbyist or visitor in or around Capitol Square who is sick or not feeling well to please refrain from entering the Capitol or Pocahontas Building.

The following plan outlines the practices and policies of the House of Delegates to address the COVID-19 pandemic during the 2022 Regular Session of the Virginia General Assembly.

COVID Symptoms

People with COVID have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Anyone can have mild to severe symptoms. People with these symptoms may have COVID:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

House Prevention and Control Practices

First and foremost, please DO NOT show up if you are sick and/or experiencing COVID symptoms.

The House of Delegates encourages all delegates, staff and visitors to contribute to a safe workplace by being cautious, careful and mindful during their time on Capitol Square:

- All persons in the House are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated against COVID and, if vaccinated, get an available booster.
- All persons in the House are strongly encouraged to practice good health and safety (e.g., wearing face masks as needed, hand washing frequently, maintaining social distances as practical and self-monitoring for any illness).

The House Clerk's Office maintains a large supply of KN95 face masks that are widely available at no charge to any who may want or choose to use them for their own health protection and safety when in the Capitol, Pocahontas Building or around Capitol Square. These well-fitting medical-grade face masks offer maximum protection of the respiratory system with up to 95% filtration efficiency as well as balancing breathability and comfort. Disposable nitrile gloves, disinfectant alcohol wipes and hand sanitizer dispensers also are available throughout the buildings, including in committee rooms.

Face masks are recommended to be worn in both the Capitol and Pocahontas Building and strongly encouraged for persons who are not vaccinated for COVID.

Face masks are required for any person choosing to ride in a General Assembly shuttle bus.

Overall occupancy capacity for the Capitol and Pocahontas Building will be strictly monitored and enforced by Capitol Police to promote better health and safety.

There are multiple temperature check machines located throughout the Capitol and Pocahontas Building, including near Capitol Police desks at building entrances, to promote self-monitoring for any illness. If observed by the Capitol Police, persons whose temperature scan shows a fever will be asked to leave the building and strongly encouraged to get tested for COVID.

Reduced capacity limits will remain in place in the elevators in the Pocahontas Building and Capitol to facilitate social distancing as is practical and persons are strongly encouraged to wear a mask if choosing to use the elevators.

Protective plexiglass "sneeze guard" shields have been installed around staff desks in high-traffic areas and hallways in the Pocahontas Building (e.g., administrative assistant desks).

The small House subcommittee rooms in the Pocahontas Building are not in use. All committee and subcommittee meetings will be held in the six larger rooms to facilitate social distancing as much as practicable.

Seating capacity has been reduced in all committee rooms to place a reasonable distance between public seating and the committee dais. Members of the public, media and lobbyists attending committee or subcommittee meetings in person may not stand in the perimeters of the room or gather in the rear of the room. If gathering outside the room, social distancing is recommended to be practiced. The Capitol Police have the authority to enforce these House safety protocols as directed by the Speaker. If a seat is unavailable, meetings can be viewed from a different location via the House live video stream. Seating for bill patrons and presenters invited by the Chair will be reserved in the front row of seating.

For those interested in monitoring House proceedings who cannot secure a seat in the gallery or a room – all House Floor, committee and subcommittee meetings are live streamed and archived at VirginiaGeneralAssembly.gov/hv.

Persons wishing to speak to a bill in committee or subcommittee also have the option to submit written feedback and/or can sign up to speak remotely via HODSpeak.house.virginia.gov. It is the policy of the House that committee and subcommittee chairs endeavor to give equal opportunity to both in person and remote attendees when hearing public testimony.

Additional housekeeping and rigorous cleaning actions are being implemented throughout the legislative environment to ensure greater safety and health of all as well as decrease the chances of spread of an infectious disease (e.g., all restrooms, common areas that remain in use, doorknobs/handles and other frequently touched surfaces are disinfected twice daily).

[Procedures for Delegates, Legislative Assistants & House Clerk's Office Employees](#)

Delegates may choose to use plastic shields set on top of their desks in the House Chamber.

Delegates may adopt additional protocols for their individual offices in the Pocahontas Building and can note those in appropriate signage nearby and/or have such communicated to visitors by their assigned administrative assistant.

All employees of the House Clerk's Office are asked to show proof of vaccination to the Human Resources Director and encouraged to wear face masks when in common public areas of the Capitol and Pocahontas Buildings. See additional protocols below applicable to House Pages.

If persons experience COVID symptoms as outlined above, they should get tested as soon as possible wherever they choose. House employees may obtain an available rapid test kit at the health clinic located on the 2nd floor of the Pocahontas Building and/or may seek out testing from a personal health care provider or personal pharmacy.

[Test locations in Virginia](#)

If you have been exposed to someone with COVID:

Exposure/Close contact means: Being within 6 feet of a person who has COVID for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.

If you are boosted and have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID:

Then no quarantine is necessary. However, you should wear a face mask whenever around others for 10 days after your exposure.

If you have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID and either:

- Are unvaccinated; or
- Are six months out from your second Pfizer or Moderna dose (or two months out from the Johnson & Johnson vaccine) and have not gotten your booster shot ...

Then you should quarantine for five (5) days following exposure and then wear a face mask for the following five (5) days.

You also should watch for other symptoms of COVID, such as cough, shortness of breath, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell.

Everyone who has been exposed should test for COVID five days after exposure. If symptoms occur after exposure, individuals should immediately self-isolate until a negative test confirms that those symptoms are not related to COVID.

If you have tested positive for COVID:

If you have tested positive for COVID and are asymptomatic (not experiencing any symptoms, such as a fever, chills, a cough, or shortness of breath), you should isolate for five days (5) and wear a well-fitting face mask for the following five (5) days.

If you have tested positive and symptoms begin resolving (gradually going away), isolate for five (5) days and wear a mask for the following five (5) days.

You should test negative for COVID before exiting your isolation period.

House Pages:

Although House employees, Pages (13-14-year old minors), come with special circumstances. Therefore, in addition to the protocols followed by adult employees, House Pages also will adhere to the following:

- Pages who show signs of COVID symptoms will be tested by the Page Coordinators or Page Chaperones with rapid tests.
- If a Page needs to be tested, regardless of the result, parents or guardians will be notified that youth is being tested and then notified of the result.
- If a Page tests positive, he/she will be sent home to quarantine and will adhere to the policy for all House employees outlined above before returning to work.

- Due to the amount of time spent together and the close proximity in which Pages work with each other and House members and other legislative staff, Pages are strongly encouraged to wear face masks whenever they are indoors at work, during study hall or in other indoor common spaces.
- Should House Page supervisory staff or a significant number of Pages become ill with COVID, the 2022 Page Program may be suspended either temporarily or for the remainder of Session, to be determined by the Speaker.

Reporting Procedures:

Delegates and Legislative Assistants –

In the event of a Delegate’s COVID diagnosis:

Delegates should alert the Speaker’s Office and the Clerk’s Office of the diagnosis immediately.

Members who are isolated because of COVID will have the ability, upon approval by the Speaker, to attend committee and subcommittee meetings as well as floor sessions remotely. When in quarantine due to COVID, members who wish to attend meetings and session on a given day, are required to attend all committee and subcommittee meetings where they are a member as well as the floor session, or none at all.

In the event of a Legislative Assistant’s diagnosis:

The Legislative Assistant should alert their Delegate and the Clerk’s Office of the diagnosis immediately.

House Clerk’s Office Support Services will contact DGS to provide a thorough cleaning of the Legislative Assistant’s and/or Delegate’s office.

House Employees –

If an employee is diagnosed with COVID, this information should be reported to their supervisor and the Human Resources Director immediately.

House Clerk’s Office Support Services will contact DGS to provide a thorough cleaning of the employee’s office.

Lobbyists / Visitors / Public –

The House Clerk’s Office asks that if a lobbyist, visitor or member of the public in or around Capitol Square is not feeling well, please refrain from entering the Capitol or Pocahontas Building and take advantage of the online streaming available through the House of Delegates website: <https://viriniageneralassembly.gov/house/chamber/chamberstream.php>

Plan Implementation:

To ensure awareness of current health and safety guidelines from various health and safety entities, the House Clerk's Office Human Resources Director, Anna Hanback, is responsible for administering this plan, checking for new advisories or information, updating this plan, communicating any changes to employees, and monitoring the overall effectiveness of the plan. She can be reached by telephone at (804) 698-1504 or by email at ahanback@house.virginia.gov.

**These policies and practices are effective January 12, 2022 once the House has elected a Speaker. Further updates and/or changes will be communicated later if necessary and/or as appropriate.*