



Industrial Re-Set: Operational and Management Guidelines for Industrial Properties Amid COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic spread quickly across the United States in February and March, forcing cities to impose stay-at-home and shelter-in-place orders. While many tenants in office buildings have been working from home, most tenants in industrial facilities have been reporting to work as usual, albeit adjusting to a “new normal” in response to rapidly developing health and safety concerns as well as federal, state, and local recommendations or mandates for protecting individuals in the workplace. But COVID-19 is still with us—and may be for the long term—so it’s far from business as usual in industrial facilities, as property managers and tenants are challenged with protecting the health and safety of workers, visitors, contractors, and other personnel and ensuring safe and healthy building operations and management practices. To provide guidance on these issues, BOMA International assembled a task force of industrial real estate professionals to develop best practices that should be considered by owners and property managers as well as other recommendations that may be shared with tenants in industrial properties. This document may be used as a framework for developing more customized management and building plans and identifies questions and important topics that should be considered. For the purposes of this document, the task force focused its recommendations on buildings used solely for industrial purposes, such as warehouse, distribution, and manufacturing, and did not specifically address flex, showroom, and other types of specialized industrial properties.

The guidelines below have been categorized as proposed actions to be taken by owners and property managers and those to be taken by tenants based on common industrial lease provisions. Due to many varying types of industrial leases, please familiarize yourself with respective lease obligations when determining which party should be responsible for specific actions.

Management Best Practices for Owners and Property Managers

Plan and Prepare

- Stay abreast of federal, state, and local mandates and recommendations, as well as guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and other regulatory and public health agencies.
- Assign a property management team to research and compile best practices, checklists, and other resources and information to share with other property managers and tenants.
- Ensure property management teams understand new policies and procedures for social distancing, use of PPE, tenant and vendor communications, property access, and health assessment and reporting; provide training where necessary.
- Consult with legal counsel on written and other notices and communications to tenants and contractors on new rules and procedures.
- Review with legal counsel all contracts for construction and other services and determine any that should be amended, canceled, or delayed. Discuss force majeure and other legal exposures and remedies.
- Plan and prepare for possible delays in tenant improvement projects and other construction due to potential inspection re-scheduling and changes to work completion timelines caused by new social distancing and cleaning protocols.
- Review leases for any necessary updates or revisions, such as new or additional tenant insurance requirements, protection of landlord from rent abatement and loss-of-use claims, and hold-harmless protection.
- Re-assess protocols for common areas, including access requirements and restrictions, cleaning and disinfection, building system maintenance or upgrades, and other best practices.
- If necessary, re-negotiate or re-bid service contracts to include new requirements for staffing or services; be sure to consider union requirements and restrictions.

Communications with Tenants and Contractors

- Ask tenants to share their new temporary and permanent health and safety protocols, procedures, and plans with you in writing, including new rules for property managers and contractors to access and perform work in the building. Share this information with your vendors and contractors.

- Require vendors and contractors to share their health and safety plans with you in writing, including social distancing, use of PPE, employee health assessments, and other new precautions and protocols when working inside the building. Share this information with your tenants.
- Clearly communicate property management's new procedures and protocols for protecting the health and safety of its personnel when interacting with tenants and tenants' employees.
- Offer guidance to tenants on operational changes in response to COVID-19. Share best practices and updates on federal, state, and local mandates and recommendations, and help identify resources for cleaning, signage, security, and other services if requested.
- Ask tenants and contractors to inform you if their employees test positive for COVID-19, and report incidences to tenants, contractors, and property managers who may be affected. Always protect the identity of the infected person and his/her employer.

Building and Property Access for Property Management and Contractors

- Notify tenants in writing regarding the landlord's responsibilities, plans, and protocols to access the building to perform inspections, preventive maintenance, and other services as required by the lease.
- Ask all vendors and contractors to contact property management in advance of performing any work on the property.
- Ensure property managers, vendors, and general contractors practice social distancing, wear protective face coverings, and frequently wash hands or use hand sanitizer while on property.
- Ask tenants to inform you of any operational changes that could affect parking areas and other property spaces outside the building—e.g. requirements for queuing to manage visitors, construction of outdoor restrooms or washrooms for delivery workers, etc.—and to submit plans to property managers for approval when necessary.
- Work with owners and brokers to schedule virtual tours when possible. Require brokers to schedule and coordinate any in-person tours with you in advance.
- Ensure food truck vendors implement appropriate standards for social distancing (e.g. queuing lines), cleaning and disinfection, and PPE use.
- Consider closing or limiting access to common areas shared by multiple tenants, such as gyms, cafes, and outdoor picnic areas, until local social distancing regulations are eased or lifted.

Common Area Cleaning

- Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfection in high-density and high-touch common areas. Consult with your janitorial provider to assess needs and determine new requirements and protocols.
- Follow CDC guidelines for more frequent cleaning of outdoor spaces, such as picnic and break areas that may be shared among tenants.
- Follow EPA, CDC, and other government-approved guidelines, recommendations, and directions for cleaning products, procedures, dwell times, and protocols; confirm with your cleaning service provider or consult a third party if practical.
- Request that maintenance personnel and other vendors clean and disinfect spaces, such as mechanical rooms, after service is performed, as well as any equipment or supplies in those spaces that may have been touched.
- Perform appropriate cleaning and disinfection following broker tours.

Tenant Operations and Workforce Safety Best Practices

Social Distancing

- Follow CDC guidelines to maintain social distancing and federal, state, and local mandates or recommendations for wearing face masks or coverings.
- Utilize signage, floor markings, and other visual guides to communicate and manage social distancing requirements in workspaces, assembly lines, production areas, break areas, restrooms, and other tenant spaces.
- Consider designating one-way corridors, stairwells, and entrances and exits to reduce contact among workers, and clearly post queuing instructions and markings where needed.
- Remove or space out furniture in reception areas, break areas, work areas, and other tenant spaces as needed. Post signage reinforcing social distancing in these areas and throughout tenant spaces.
- If possible, consider closing break rooms and other areas where groups of workers could congregate until social distancing regulations are eased or lifted.

- If possible and practical, consider staggering shift start and end times and break times to reinforce social distancing and limit the number of workers arriving/departing or using restrooms and break rooms at any one time. However, be sure to follow applicable union requirements before any changes are implemented.
- Restrict access to refrigerators, microwaves, and other appliances in break areas or kitchens. At the very least, clean and disinfect these areas and appliances frequently throughout the day and after breaks, and post signage clearly communicating new usage rules.
- If lockers are provided to workers, consider assigning lockers to correspond with shift differences to promote social distancing in locker rooms (i.e. no two workers on the same shift would have lockers next to each other).
- If the building has elevators, restrict elevator cab occupancy, if possible, and place queuing marks, stanchions, or floor decals in elevator lobbies to reinforce social distancing.
- To ease elevator traffic and wait times, consider opening stairwells and designate “up” and “down” stairwells to reduce contact.

Workforce Health and Safety

- Communicate new rules, procedures, and protocols with all workers and building personnel for social distancing, use of PPE, health screening/assessments, illness reporting, etc., and provide applicable training.
- Promote proper hygiene such as frequent handwashing (with hot water and soap for 20 seconds, as recommended), and provide hand sanitizers in work areas, break areas, restrooms, and other tenant spaces.
- Where practical, recommend workers use face coverings, gloves, and other appropriate PPE while in the building—especially in work areas—and provide touch-free covered waste containers for disposing used masks and gloves.
- Following CDC guidance, discourage workers from sharing equipment, phones, and computers. If equipment must be shared, clean and disinfect after each use and between shifts.
- If possible, require workers and contractors to maintain their own tools and to clean and disinfect all tools between uses.
- Consider retrofitting restrooms with touch-free fixtures and dispensers. Consider other touch-free options in the building for doors, switches, trash containers, etc.
- Screen employees, visitors, vendors, and contractors before they enter the building to ensure appropriate use of masks and other PPE, and limit vendor and contractor access to assigned work areas only.
- Require truck drivers and delivery personnel to wear face coverings at transaction points at a minimum. Consider implementing digital and other no-contact transaction and key drop-off procedures with vendors, contractors, and delivery personnel.
- If tenant elects to perform temperature checks and other health screenings at the building, consider contracting with a nurse or other health professional to perform these screenings, and designate a private area in or outside the building to protect the personal privacy of workers and visitors.
- Encourage employees to perform health assessments at home and to stay home or seek medical care if they are ill, have a temperature, or have a cough.
- Ask employees to notify you if they test positive for COVID-19; tenant should inform the landlord of any confirmed cases. Also inform other employees and anyone else who may have had contact with the infected employee so that they may seek medical attention and to control spread. Always protect the identity of the infected employee.
- Continue normal and regular HVAC maintenance, including filter changes, and consider increasing exhaust and infusion of outside air, if possible. Consult ASHRAE guidelines for operating heating, ventilating, and air conditioning systems to reduce COVID-19 transmission and follow CDC guidelines where applicable.

Cleaning

- Consult with your cleaning contractor about the scope, level, and frequency of cleaning that may be needed in the building based on use, occupancy, and other relevant factors.
- Review site inventory for adequate cleaning supplies and products and ensure cleaning supplies and materials used by the cleaning contractor are not shared with other buildings or clients.
- Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfection in high-density and high-touch areas, such as building and elevator lobbies; elevator interiors, buttons, and surfaces; restrooms; furniture; fixtures; switch plates; doorknobs; mats; handrails; turnstiles; stairwells; counters; trash containers; and other frequently touched surfaces.
- Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfection in kitchens, break rooms, and break areas, and provide disposable and recyclable cups, plates, and utensils and/or enforce strict dishwashing rules.
- Increase frequency of cleaning workspaces, such as assembly lines, conveyor belts, and other production areas between shifts and as practical throughout the day.

- Clean and disinfect forklifts, pallet jacks, and other equipment between users.
- Provide workers with disinfectant wipes and other cleaning materials and encourage them to regularly clean personal workspaces and equipment.
- Follow EPA, CDC, and other government-approved guidelines, recommendations, and directions for cleaning products, procedures, dwell times, and protocols; confirm with your service provider or consult a third party if practical.
- Depending on need, level of desired cleaning, and budget, consider using hand-held UVC wands or electrostatic sprayers for quick, high-volume disinfecting; flash restrooms with UVC or electrostatic spray disinfection when empty.
- Regularly clean and sanitize restrooms and wash areas used by truckers and other vendors, delivery personnel, or visitors.
- If any personnel, employee, or visitor tests positive for COVID-19, schedule deep cleaning and disinfection in the affected areas. Follow a defined COVID-19 cleaning program provided by a qualified service provider.

Resources

- **American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE)**
www.ashrae.org/technical-resources/resources
- **BOMA International**
www.boma.org/coronavirus
- **Centers for Disease Control (CDC)**
www.cdc.gov/coronavirus
- **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Resource Center**
www.coronavirus.gov
- **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**
www.eeoc.gov
- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**
www.fema.gov/coronavirus
- **International Codes Council (ICC)**
www.iccsafe.org
- **Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA)**
www.osha.gov/coronavirus
- **White House**
www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica
- **World Health Organization (WHO)**
www.who.int/coronavirus

For more information about BOMA International's coronavirus and emergency preparedness resources, please visit:

www.boma.org