

State of
Washington
House of
Representatives



**COVID-19 2022
Session Operations Plan
March 1, 2022 Update**

I. OVERVIEW

The Washington State House of Representatives (House) is committed to doing the people's work while reducing the risk of spreading COVID-19. This document provides guidelines for House operations during the 2022 Legislative Session.

The following imperatives guided the development of this document:

- Ensuring accountable and transparent operations of the House;
- Preserving and enhancing public participation; and
- Protecting the health and safety of the public, House members, and staff.

This document relies on the guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), local public health authorities, the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I), and the Department of Health (DOH). Changes will be communicated and implemented as we receive new information or guidance.

II. 2022 SESSION OPERATIONS

Modified House operations are being followed to keep members, staff, and the public safe and to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic persists and access to House facilities during the 2022 legislative session continues to carry a risk of infection, both to the legislative community and within communities across the entire state. However, operational changes that were implemented to enable and enhance public participation, such as remote participation and alternative ways to contact member offices will continue. Additionally, all committee meetings and floor action will continue to be streamed on TVW.

Testing Protocol

During the 2022 session, access to House facilities on the Capitol Campus is limited to members and staff. Anyone who works onsite must undergo regular testing with the onsite vendor and adhere to the House testing protocol. This requires testing with the onsite vendor on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays during testing hours.

Anyone who misses the testing windows on testing days will not be permitted to work onsite until the next testing window. A negative test result on Monday provides access for Monday and Tuesday; a negative test result on Wednesday provides access for Wednesday and Thursday; and a negative test result on Friday provides access for Friday and the weekend. A negative test result is required prior to accessing the floor

on testing days. Failure to adhere to the guidelines may result in such as actions as removal from House facilities or other disciplinary measures.

Committee Operations

Committee meetings will continue be held remotely via Zoom in accordance with House rules. The House remains committed to facilitating public participation. The public will have the ability to testify remotely, supporting broad participation.

The legislative website includes information regarding how the public can participate, including addressing accessibility for individuals with disabilities. The public can sign up to provide testimony over the virtual platform once a bill is scheduled for public hearing. The sign-up will close one hour prior to the start of the meeting. Those testifying will be provided an individual Zoom link in order to participate. Committee Chairs will continue to decide the order and length of the public testimony. Additionally, the public may provide written testimony for bills scheduled for a public hearing. Written testimony for a bill will close 24 hours after the start time of the hearing.

House Floor

Beginning on March 1st, in addition to the members authorized to be on the floor under House Rule A-3 (1), each caucus is permitted additional members, totaling 45 at a time. Members and staff must adhere to social distancing and masking requirements while on the floor, which include wearing a KN-95, KF-94, N-95, or equivalent mask (respirator) provided by the House.

House floor operations have been adjusted to include more members on the floor in person over the course of the 2022 session. The total number of members permitted on the floor is established taking into account the public health guidance on social distancing and line-of sight for the presiding officer. Due to space constraints, the majority of members during any given floor session will continue to participate remotely. Members continue to be permitted to secure temporary spaces in their community for their remote participation. This might involve partnering with cities, counties, or community and technical colleges to secure short-term space with stable internet connectivity in order to facilitate remote participation. The caucus rooms are configured for social distancing and have reduced capacity. Member access to the wings of the House chamber is limited to members who are permitted to participate on the floor at the time of the floor session. Staff access to the wings of the House chamber is limited to staff who work from that location and staff directors or their designees.

House Galleries

During House floor sessions, the south gallery will be open to credentialed press. Beginning March 1, 2022, the north gallery will be open to the public. The first row in the north gallery will continue to be reserved for press. Prior to entry into the north gallery, individuals will be screened for weapons such as firearms or blades, which are not permitted in the gallery. Individuals over the age of five must wear KN-95/KF-94 or equivalent mask. If an individual does not have the appropriate mask, the House will provide one. Additionally, prior to entering the galleries, individuals must self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms and sign in. Gallery capacity is reduced to accommodate social distancing. Any individual permitted into the gallery must adhere to distancing and mask requirements.

Capitol Campus Office Access

Information regarding contacting a member's office is accessible on the House public website. Members

who are permitted access to House facilities may not meet with the public, stakeholders, or lobbyists in House facilities. Meetings with staff should also occur remotely. Members must self-screen prior to entering the facilities, sign-in, and wear a mask, preferably a KN-95/KF-94 or equivalent mask (provided by the House), anytime they are in public spaces or anytime they are not alone, including within their own office, and maintain at least six feet of distance from others.

The House has limited space to accommodate social distancing and as a result, staff are encouraged to continue to work remotely, regardless of vaccination status. Staff who are seeking to work onsite need prior approval and should discuss their request with their staff directors or supervisor. Staff access is subject to prior approval of the Chief Clerk. Any staff working onsite at the Capitol Campus must adhere to House testing and other COVID protocols.

Processes

All workroom documents will be accepted electronically. A blue sheet or green sheet must be dropped in the eHopper by the member via email. All floor amendments must be submitted electronically, rather than dropped on the bar.

Additional Session Programs

The House Page Program is suspended during the 2022 legislative session. The Legislative Intern Program will be conducted virtually.

The House Cafeteria will be open for lunch pick-up but dining-in will not be permitted. Members can call ahead or order in person to carry out.

The following applies to anyone accessing House facilities on the Capitol Campus or in-district:

1. Members and staff working onsite at the Capitol Campus must adhere to the House testing protocols.
2. Everyone must self-screen, regardless of vaccination status, prior to entering any House facility and sign-in prior to entering House facilities on the Capitol Campus. Signs regarding symptoms are posted at each House Facility entrance. [See House Screening Questionnaire.]
3. Everyone must wear a mask, regardless of vaccination status, while in public settings such as common areas and hallways or when interacting in person with anyone else, regardless.^{2,3} This includes in district offices as well as those located in Olympia. Masks must be worn properly over one's nose and mouth and secure under one's chin.^{4,5} Those staff who need an accommodation to mask wearing need to notify their supervisor and/or House ADA coordinator Kyle Overmiller (x7271). KN-95/KF-94 or equivalent masks are recommended and are available.
4. While masks are not required to be worn if an individual is working onsite alone in an enclosed work area, if anyone else enters the work area, all individuals must wear a mask, regardless of vaccination status. If a workstation does not have a door, such as a cubicle, a person must wear their mask anytime another person is working in the same area, including in a cubicle that shares an entry way. Those staff who need an accommodation to mask wearing need to notify their supervisor and/or House ADA coordinator Kyle Overmiller (x7271).
5. Exceptions to this mask wearing requirement may be made if an individual is deaf or hard of hearing or is communicating with someone who relies on language cues such as facial markers and expression and mouth movements as a part of communication; or if an individual has a medical condition or disability

that makes wearing a mask inappropriate. Please contact House ADA coordinator [Kyle Overmiller](#) (x7271) or [House Security](#) (x7771), if an accommodation regarding masks is needed while on the Capitol Campus.

6. Six-foot distancing must be maintained in all spaces, at all times, regardless of vaccination status, and members and staff will continue to follow respiratory etiquette, hand washing guidelines, and disinfecting of shared spaces (kitchen and copiers) after use. People must disperse if a situation arises that makes adequate distancing impossible.⁶

III. EXPECTATIONS FOR HOUSE OPERATIONS

Everyone is asked to continue efforts to keep each other safe by reducing the likelihood for transmission of COVID-19. These include the following:

1. Members may choose to work alone remotely from their assigned office on the capitol campus. Members permitted access to their assigned legislative offices must comply with public health guidelines (masking, distancing, hygiene) both on and off the capitol campus, testing requirements, and acknowledge that House facilities remain closed to the public. Members must adhere to the House testing protocol on the Capitol Campus.
2. The House is continuing to operate under a temporary telework policy that permits staff to entirely telework. Staff are encouraged to plan to telework during the 2022 session regardless of vaccination status. Staff must receive prior approval from their staff director. Staff directors must submit a staffing plan to the Chief Clerk's Office for approval for any staff seeking to work onsite. This plan should consider how many staff or members would be present at a given time to ensure that ample social distancing is able to be maintained at all times, including when dining. The Chief Clerk's Office will update the work schedule system to reflect telework or any days onsite (both on campus and in district). Any staff working onsite must adhere to the House testing protocols, and if that is not possible (such as missing a testing time) they must not come onsite.
3. If a person in an at-risk category is in need of a work accommodation (for example, a need to continue to telework when they would otherwise be directed to work in a building facility) they must notify their supervisor and/or the House ADA coordinator, Kyle Overmiller.⁷
4. Most importantly, anyone who is sick, not feeling well, or displaying symptoms, should plan to stay home and help prevent the spread of illness. Before entering House facilities for any purpose, individuals must self-screen using public health criteria. [See House Screening].
5. Conference room capacity is lower to support adequate distancing. Revised capacity for rooms can be found on the House intranet. Hearing Rooms A & B are not available for reservation.
6. Generally during session, staff travel is limited. All staff travel, regardless of worksite, requires advance approval.
7. The workout room is open and individuals should wipe down equipment after use.
8. Avanti Market services are available in the JLOB basement or in the Pritchard Building.
9. Consuming food in common/public areas indoors is not permitted.
10. If you are onsite at the Capitol Campus and receive a positive test through the onsite vendor, be sure to always keep a mask on - even if you are by yourself in an office. Leave the premises while avoiding close contact. You should isolate for five days. This is not meant to be a substitute for medical advice. After isolating, you may return after five days if you are symptom free and adhere to the testing

protocol and receive a negative test through the onsite vendor during a testing window before entering your workspace.

11. If anyone becomes ill with COVID-19 like symptoms during the workday, that person must immediately notify their supervisor and leave the building. They should not return to a House facility until cleared by a healthcare provider or as otherwise set out in CDC guidelines. Contact House Counsel at x7767 with any questions regarding return-to-work timelines
12. If anyone accesses a House facility, and later has or develops signs/symptoms of COVID-19 (see COVID-19 screening questions) or is themselves found positive or has been in close contact with someone who is experiencing symptoms or is confirmed positive, they must report the development of symptoms, positive diagnosis, or close contact to the House Counsel and, if an employee, to the employee's staff director. Information must be provided to House Counsel on what areas they occupied and who they had close contact with, as defined by the CDC. Information will only be shared as appropriate and allowed by law.
13. In the event someone becomes diagnosed with COVID-19 and accessed House facilities, the workspace will be disinfected according to CDC guidelines.⁸
14. Pursuant to the requirements of ESSB 5115, the House will provide notification to staff and members on the premise at the same worksite as a qualifying individual of potential exposure.
15. All vendors must be vaccinated against COVID-19 and wear a mask at all times in order to access House facilities.

IV. MOVING FORWARD

House Administration, in collaboration with others, continue to take the following steps in preparation for interim operations:

House Counsel provides:

- Assistance and advice to employees and management with issues related to work conditions and building access, including information for staff regarding accommodations, leave options, and work with local public health authorities in the event of exposure.

For staff and members who are on-site, House Administration, in collaboration with others, will:

- Ensure availability and proper placement of sanitizing materials (e.g., wipes and hand sanitizer), protective equipment, tissues, and wastebaskets.
- Provide signage, reconfigure spaces to reinforce safe practices including installing physical barriers, increase disinfecting, and change HVAC filters.
- Address accessibility needs and requests for accommodations.

The Chief Clerk's Office will continue to monitor public health guidance and adjust operations as necessary. This may also include returning to more restricted access of House facilities if staff or operations are compromised. House member and staff diligence and flexibility are essential.

Thank you all for your assistance.

- ¹ See, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html?s_cid=11350:fully%20vaccinated%20cdc:sem.ga:p:RG:GM:gen:PTN:FY21
- ² See, <https://www.lni.wa.gov/forms-publications/F414-179-000.pdf>
- ³ See, <https://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/COVID19%20Professional%20Services%20Guidance.pdf>
- ⁴ See, <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/Employervisitorscreeningguidance.pdf>.
- ⁵ See, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/effective-masks.html>
- ⁶ See, <https://www.lni.wa.gov/forms-publications/F414-164-000.pdf>
- ⁷ See, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>
- ⁸ See, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>