



Georgia House of Representatives

Date: May 12, 2020

From: Georgia House of Representatives Committee on Reopening
Leader Jon Burns, Co-Chair
Leader Bob Trammell, Co-Chair
Chairman Matt Hatchett
Representative William Boddie
Representative Mark Newton, M.D.
Hon. Bill Reilly, Clerk of the House
Hon. Spiro Amburn, Chief of Staff
Hon. Holli Pitcock, Speaker's Office Director of Constituent Services
Hon. Betsy Theroux, House Messenger

To: Speaker of the House David Ralston

Re: Reopening of House Offices at the Capitol and the Coverdell Legislative Office Building on June 1, 2020

I. Georgia Building Authority Procedures

A. Sanitizing the Capitol and the Coverdell Legislative Office Building:

The Georgia Building Authority ("GBA") will be responsible for sanitizing the Capitol and the Coverdell Legislative Office Building ("CLOB"). The GBA has increased its capacity to sanitize both the public and private areas of the Capitol and the CLOB (the "Capitol Complex") and has increased day-time janitorial staff by fourteen (14) janitors to expand the cleaning options available throughout the day.

1. Public Spaces

Public areas of the Capitol Complex (the House and Senate Chambers, hallways, committee rooms, etc.) will be "fogged" daily using a non-toxic hypochlorous misting solution used by the GBA that sanitizes surfaces in the rooms in which it is used. (This is the same method that is being used by the National Guard, the Department of Corrections, and the Department of Juvenile Justice, among others.) Public restrooms will be sanitized at least four times per day. The House and Senate Chambers specifically have been "fogged" multiple times since Session was suspended, and GBA has done a "deep clean" of the surfaces in both Chambers.

2. Private Spaces

Private offices will be cleaned daily, with particular attention paid to high-contact surfaces. Private offices will be "fogged" two to three times per week. Private restrooms within offices will be sanitized two times per day.

GBA will provide a cleaning solution to all offices for continual cleaning throughout the day. Offices should ensure that they remain stocked with paper towels to use with the cleaning solution.

B. Social Distancing in the Capitol Complex

GBA will be placing additional signage throughout the Capitol Complex encouraging social distancing and reminding people on the premises to practice proper hygiene. GBA will be specifically focusing on the areas around elevators, where crowds often gather, and will place signs promoting social distancing and explaining restrictions on the numbers of people in elevators at one time. GBA will be marking a grid pattern on the floors of elevators to encourage social distancing and encourage people on elevators to face in different directions to keep personal contact to a minimum.

GBA will limit the seating areas in the Capitol Complex and has blocked off certain seats to encourage social distancing. GBA will limit any space in its control within the Capitol Complex, including the North/South Wing steps, to General Assembly members only and will not be accepting reservations for outside groups in public areas of the Capitol.

C. Access to the Capitol

Access to the Capitol is currently managed by GBA and the Department of Public Safety. GBA will encourage members of the public to wear face coverings to access the Capitol Complex itself, but will not deny access for a failure to wear a face covering. GBA plans to place infrared temperature screening scanners at two public entrance points of the Capitol (Washington Street (second floor) and Mitchell Street (ground floor)) and at the public entrance point to the CLOB (Mitchell Street). These scanners will alert the guards at those entrances when an individual whose temperature is above a certain threshold attempts to enter the building (100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, based on consultation with the Department of Public Health). If the scanner alerts the guards, the guards can perform additional screening measures (questions can be asked, additional temperature screening can be performed to determine whether the temperature is 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit or higher) on the individual to make the determination as to whether the person should be able to enter the building. These screening mechanisms will be applied to members and staff as they enter the building as well.

GBA will provide manned screening checkpoints for members/staff only at the entrance to the CLOB from the parking deck and the second floor Mitchell Street entrance to the Capitol. The Senate has asked for a Members-only (no staff) entrance at the ground floor Capitol Avenue/Liberty Plaza entrance and for the elevator across from that entrance to be designated a Members-only elevator. The Committee recommends that the ground floor Capitol Avenue/Liberty Plaza entrance be open to both Members and staff and the elevator outside of that entrance be limited to Members and staff.

GBA will close all entrances to the Capitol Complex other than those equipped with a manned temperature scanner, including those that are typically accessed by key cards. Specifically, GBA will be closing the key card entrances to the Capitol on MLK and the key card entrance on Capitol Avenue/Liberty Plaza on the second floor.

GBA has asked for the House, the Senate, and the Governor's Office to provide input to GBA on how GBA should handle individuals whose temperature is elevated. Based upon consultation with GBA and the Department of Public Health, the Committee recommends that GBA deny access to the Capitol Complex to individuals whose temperatures exceed 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit.

D. Additional Policies Implemented by GBA

GBA has increased the air-flow of the air conditioning system in the Capitol Complex, providing for the intake of more fresh air from the outside, rather than recirculating air as often within the building upon recommendations from health professionals.

GBA is currently keeping the cafeteria in the Twin Towers open, with guidelines in place for social distancing, and salad bars/self-service areas have been closed. The cafeteria in the CLOB is temporarily closed.

GBA has placed more trash cans and hand sanitizing stations throughout the Capitol Complex. GBA is working with GEMA to ensure that there is sufficient hand sanitizer in the building.

GBA is currently evaluating the number of individuals (excluding members and General Assembly and executive branch staff) that can be in the Capitol safely and still complying with social distancing requirements and will be working with the Department of Public Health and the Governor's Office to determine the appropriate number of individuals that can safely enter the building.

II. Policies to be Determined by the House:

A. In-Office Safety Policies

Employees of the Georgia House of Representatives (hereinafter "House Employees" or "Employees") who are present in the Capitol Complex shall follow safety procedures for their safety and the safety of those around them. The following recommendations have been developed using guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (the "CDC"), the Georgia Department of Public Health (the "DPH"), and the United States Department of Labor (the "DOL") as of May 1, 2020. These recommendations will be updated as additional guidance is issued by the CDC, the DPH, the DOL, and other state and federal agencies. Future updates should be distributed to staff directly. These safety recommendations are not intended to be all-inclusive, and Employees should be encouraged to make additional efforts to keep themselves and their office spaces safe. These are the minimum standards with which Employees should comply.

B. Working On-Site at the Capitol Complex

The Committee recommends that the official reopening of offices at the Capitol and the Coverdell Legislative Office Building begin on June 1, 2020. Additionally, Employees should continue to be allowed to telework unless a specific Employee's presence is required at the Capitol Complex for a specific purpose, such as a Committee hearing day or a day of Session. As childcare options may continue to be limited for the foreseeable future and Employees may be dealing with personal health issues or those of their family members, we should seek to be flexible and understanding while also ensuring that members and the public continue to receive the highest level of service. High-risk Employees should be given as much flexibility as possible to continue to telework, and Employees who are symptomatic in any way should stay home and continue to telework as they are able. Sick leave and paid time off policies should be reviewed in conjunction with Human Resources to ensure that Employees are not being encouraged to come to work when symptomatic.

The House should consider staggering the work hours or days to avoid having Employees come into close contact with each other where possible. A policy should be formulated for how to handle staggering in-office hours or days, including providing who (Employees, Speaker's Office, individual members) can make the determination that staggered work hours are appropriate for an office or office suite. In particular, a policy should be formulated to provide for situations in which Employees (or House Members) have health conditions or concerns that would necessitate measures beyond those that are outlined in this document if those individuals have cause to be in-person in the Capitol Complex.

For the remainder of the 2020 Legislative Session, only Employees of the Georgia House of Representatives should work on-site in House office space. Interns (whether unpaid or paid out of public, personal, or campaign funds), pages, and temporary House Employees (except as authorized by the Speaker's Office) should not work in House offices during the remainder of the 2020 Legislative Session.

C. Health of Employees

Employees who experience any of the following symptoms should immediately contact their direct supervisor and should not report to work unless and until told otherwise:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

If an Employee begins to experience any of the preceding symptoms, they should immediately contact their direct supervisor and leave the Capitol Complex as quickly as possible. Policies should be formulated in conjunction with Human Resources and counsel to determine best practices while maintaining necessary confidentiality.

Policies should be developed by Human Resources and legal counsel, in conjunction with the committee, to handle a circumstance in which an Employee tests positive for COVID-19, including mechanisms for notifying their employer (subject to any legal restrictions) and how the employer should manage informing other staff that they may have been exposed to COVID-19. Additionally, a policy should be developed by Human Resources and legal counsel to handle a situation in which someone in an Employee's home (family member, partner, roommate, etc.) or someone with whom the Employee has been in close contact is diagnosed with COVID-19.

D. Office Spaces

Staff should, to the extent possible, given space restrictions within offices, maintain six feet of distance between themselves and other individuals. In the event that an interaction is required with another Employee, House Member, or another individual inside the Capitol Complex, Employees should make every attempt to conduct such interactions virtually or over the telephone. For interactions that must be in-person, Employees should follow social distancing guidelines, particularly regarding to maintaining six feet of space between individuals and in practicing good hygiene (washing hands frequently (see below) and coughing or sneezing into a tissue or elbow rather than into hands) and wearing face coverings.

Individual offices should restrict access to their office to individuals, other than Employees of the Georgia House of Representatives assigned to that particular office, in numbers necessary to comply with social distancing guidelines allowing for at least a 6-foot radius of space around each individual. Individual offices should not permit anyone other than Employees of the Georgia House of Representatives to work from their offices in the Capitol Complex, including pages and/or interns (whether the intern is unpaid or is paid from public or personal/campaign funds). Individual offices should restrict access to offices to individuals who are wearing face coverings and may require the use of hand sanitizer upon entering the individual office. Individual offices should maintain a log of visitors to their office including name, email address, and phone numbers. The date and time which each visitor visited the office should be noted.

Individual offices should not host, or allow to be hosted on their premises, meals that are served from shared containers including, but not limited to, buffet meals and sandwich trays.

E. Face Coverings

Employees should wear face coverings (masks or other face coverings, including cloth face coverings) at any time that they are likely to come into contact with other individuals. Employees should, at a minimum, wear face coverings that cover the entire mouth and nose:

1. From the time they exit their vehicles until they enter their personal office space;
2. At any time that Employees are in public areas of the building (hallways, restrooms, committee rooms; etc.); and
3. At any time that they will be in contact with another individual(s) in an enclosed space within the Capitol Complex, including in a private office space in which there is more than one Employee or individual.

Cloth face coverings should (1) be made of a material that is not transparent and through which light cannot be seen, (2) allow for breathing without restriction, (3) cover the nose and mouth, and (4) be laundered and machine dried after each use. For further information on creating homemade cloth face covering, the CDC website has instructions available that will be shared with Employees.

F. Personal Hygiene

Employees should wash their hands as often as possible throughout the day, using soap and water, for at least twenty seconds per hand washing. In the event that soap and water are not available, Employees may use a hand sanitizer that is comprised of at least 60% alcohol. Employees should clean their hands, preferably by washing with soap and water, but with hand sanitizer if no soap and water are available, at a minimum:

1. Upon arriving at the Capitol complex;
2. Prior to and after eating;
3. After using the restroom;
4. After sneezing or coughing;
5. Prior to and after removing a face covering; and
6. Prior to leaving the Capitol Complex.

Employees should not engage in physical contact with each other or other individuals in the Capitol Complex and should not, among other actions, shake hands or embrace.

G. Individual Office Sanitation Procedures:

In addition to the sanitation procedures that will be carried out by GBA and janitorial staff, Employees should attempt to clean and disinfect frequently-touched areas within their personal office space at least twice a day using the solution provided by GBA or another cleaning product of their choice that meets the EPA's criteria for use against COVID-19. Objects and surfaces that meet the criteria for frequent cleaning include, but are not limited to, workstations, keyboards, computer mice, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs. Dirty surfaces can be cleaned with soap and water prior to disinfection. Employees should avoid using other Employees' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, items that are used by more than one Employee should be cleaned and disinfected before and after use.

H. Access to House-Controlled Spaces

Outside groups (advocacy groups, civic groups, etc.) will not be allowed to reserve House-controlled spaces within the Capitol complex. Reservations for House-controlled spaces will not be accepted for any purpose that is not related to the business of the House. Reservations may be made for caucus meetings, committee and subcommittee meetings, and delegation meetings in House-controlled spaces.

III. Miscellaneous

As additional information is learned about COVID-19 and how it can be spread, House policies and procedures will continue to be updated to ensure the highest level of safety for our Employees and for those who enter our offices. The Committee is continuing its work regarding in-person Committee meetings and Session floor procedures, including public access to the Gallery and rope-line procedures, and will provide additional recommendations at a later date.